

IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT IN MANITOBA,
1870 - 1881; THE BEGINNINGS OF A PATTERN

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Immigration and Settlement in Manitoba,
(188⁷0 - 1881): The Beginnings of a Pattern

The purpose of this study is to examine the immigration and settlement pattern that developed in Manitoba in the first decade after that province entered Confederation. An attempt will be made to show the significance of that pattern in so far as it represented the first sizeable efforts at encouraging immigration and settlement, and in so far as these efforts did not show any marked change, at least until the end of the 19th Century.

To reveal the nature of the above pattern, consideration will be given to the following factors: the legal framework that existed for immigration and settlement in Manitoba to take place; the immigration propaganda that was used to find suitable immigrants; the transportation facilities that were provided for the immigrants' coming; the challenges of the homestead system that the settler encountered; and the response he made to these challenges.

When developing the above factors efforts will be made to indicate the problems this pattern encountered and the difficulties it had in not realizing a greater success. Reference at least will be made to its American counterpart, from which it borrowed considerably and which was its largest competitor. Attention will also be given to the inadequacies that were inherent in the pattern, and which would be eliminated only as the Canadian authorities gained more experience in the organization of an immigration and settlement policy.

Finally, it is hoped that this work will add some light on the social development of a province in the first decade of its history.

Hertha Evelyn Jahn

"It must be remembered that Manitoba is yet in the years of its youth. It is to be what the willing hands and fertile brains of thousands, who are not yet its inhabitants, shall make it. It is a land not completed; ... some would call it a land crude, unsettled, unfinished. That is precisely what it is."

Rev. George Bryce

'Manitoba: Its infancy, Growth
and Present Condition'

Preface

The three hundred hardy Highlanders who came to settle in the Red River Valley between 1811 and 1815 did not establish a pattern for immigration and settlement in Manitoba. Their heroic efforts were only made possible by a private case of philanthropy which, in that province, was not to be repeated.

The next attempt at a sizeable settlement in Manitoba was made after the half-way mark in the century had passed. Soon after 1850, Archdeacon Cochrane "led his gallant little band"¹ to the Portage Plains and thus began the flow of Ontario settlers to the West. But, without government support and interrupted by the Red River political troubles, this effort was also to be suspended.

In 1870, Prime Minister Macdonald noted that, for Manitoba, "the speedy settlement of the country by hardy emigrants from all parts of the civilized world"² would be a necessity. Yet this development was not to come until after the province had entered Confederation. That event placed Manitoba in a new political, economic and social perspective. In this climate were created the beginnings of a pattern of immigration and settlement.

This study is an attempt to find such a pattern amongst the many and diverse elements that are part of the phenomena of immigration and settlement in Manitoba in its first decade. Because this period coincided with the first organized efforts to start a mass settlement of the province, and because, to some

¹ Margaret McWilliams, Manitoba Milestones, (Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1928), p. 149.

² Canada, House of Commons, Debates, I, (Feb. 15, 1870), 1294.

extent, these efforts succeeded, some pattern must have existed.

The work that has been done in this area ranges from the early general histories to the recent local ones, and from the detailed studies of ethnic group settlements to the sociological treatments of immigration and settlement trends. These works have either focused entirely on one locality or ethnic group, or they have been general treatments of a long time-period. The aim of this study is to avoid these extremes and thus, perhaps, be able to draw more valid conclusions about the factors that were at work during the first decade of immigration to the province of Manitoba.

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CHAPTER I

The Early Federal Government

Policy on Immigration and Settlement

During the debate on Manitoba's entry into Confederation, Sir Francis Hincks said that he was ready to admit "the absurdity" of the whole scheme, but for one factor. He was impressed by the great opportunities that lay in a large scale immigration to the Canadian West. Here his optimism knew no bounds. While reviewing the case for Manitoba, he concluded:

Before the month they were now entering was well advanced, ... (people) would be flocking in, and in so short a time that he was afraid to say how short, an immense population would be enjoying the institutions of a free British people.¹

These bright hopes were not to bear fruit for several decades. Before they could be realized much work had to be done. One important matter was the effort that would have to be made to clarify the vague statements that then existed as the federal government's policy on immigration and settlement.

The British North America Act had given loose control over immigration to both the federal and provincial governments, without delimiting the sphere of either, but with final authority resting in the federal government.² This lack of clarity caused one government level to depend on the other with the result that

¹ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, I, (Feb. 15, 1870), 1307.

² Canada, Statutes, 30 and 31 Vict., c. 3, sec. 95, (1867), "The British North America Act".

not much immigration work was accomplished.³ An attempt to clarify the matter was made in 1869, when the Emigration Act was passed giving the federal government the responsibility for all immigration agencies, both domestic and foreign. The provinces remained in control of the settlement of their waste lands and had the right to reject certain classes and types of immigrants. Three more conferences, attended by federal and provincial authorities, were held before an immigration policy, acceptable to all provinces, emerged. The third of these conferences, held in 1874, put immigration exclusively in the hands of the federal Minister of Agriculture and left colonization in the hands of the provinces (with the exception of the North-West Territories). This was to remain the basis of federal-provincial relations on immigration until 1892.⁴

During the 1870's, the authority the federal government exercised over both immigration and settlement was vested in two departments. The responsibility for immigration rested with the Minister of Agriculture and the supervision of settlement was

³Evidence of this is found in the correspondence between Sir John A. Macdonald and Premier John Sandfield Macdonald of Ontario. Sir John A. Macdonald wrote to the Ontario Premier on May 20, 1868, asking him to set "the pattern for a liberal immigration policy", (p. 2270). The Ontario Premier immediately tossed the responsibility back to the federal authorities. His firm stand was expressed in his letter to Sir John A. Macdonald, dated June 5, 1868: "We are of the opinion that the Dominion Government must take the lead in respect to the pecuniary aid towards inducing emigrants to come to the Province", (p. 2282). This situation could only be remedied by a clearer definition of jurisdictions.

Ottawa, John Sandfield Macdonald Papers, Vol. II, (May - June, 1868), pp. 2270 - 2282.

⁴Norman Macdonald, Canada - Immigration and Colonization, (1841 - 1903), (Toronto: The MacMillan Co. of Canada, 1939), pp. 95 - 97.

given first to the Secretary of State, and after May 3, 1873, to the Minister of the Interior. All of these government bodies had little else to draw from than American precedent and the limited Canadian experience of the past few decades. Hence, the decisions they made and the legislation they passed were but the rude beginnings of a comprehensive immigration and settlement policy.

The provisions the federal government made for immigration were written into the Immigration Aid Societies Act of 1872, and were seen in the activities of the Select Committee on Immigration and Colonization that had been constituted in the early 1870's. The conditions for settlement, or, as they were more frequently called, the Dominion government's "land policy", were formulated in the two Orders-in-Council of April 25th and May 26, 1871, and in the Dominion Lands Act of 1872.

The Immigration Aid Societies Act of 1872 was passed:

For the purpose of encouraging and facilitating immigration into Canada, from the United Kingdom and other parts of Europe

By the Act, the Minister of Agriculture could "from time to time" divide the Canadian provinces into immigration districts with each having an immigration office and an immigration agent.⁶ The latter

⁵Canada, Statutes, 35 Vict., C. 29, Preamble, (1872), "An Act to provide for the incorporation of Immigration Aid Societies."

⁶Ibid., Sec. 1.

could certify Immigration Aid Societies whose function was to assist immigrants to reach Canada from Europe, obtain employment on arrival, and also, to help those in Canada who wanted "labourers, artisans or servants", to obtain them through immigration.⁷ The powers of the Societies were quite remarkable. The authority given them to enter into agreements "for any purpose relating to immigration", included the right to borrow money, give security for it, receive applications, enter into contracts, determine wages for immigrants, and pay all or part of immigrants' passage money from Europe to Canada.⁸ These were ambitious plans that required large-scale immigration for their fulfillment.

The activities of the Select Committee on Immigration and Colonization were carried out under the active chairmanship of James Trow, M. P. In its first report of 1875, the Committee indicated that it had secured the provinces' agreement to centralizing the management of immigration agencies in the Minister of Agriculture. Henceforth, the Dominion government's agents were to be responsible for securing immigrants abroad and the province's agents, for caring for immigrants on arrival. At an Immigration Conference held in Ottawa on November 4th and 5, 1874, (and at which Manitoba was not represented) an attempt was made to eliminate separate and wasteful efforts by appointing an Agent-General, who would head all the work of Canadian immigration abroad. Mr. Edward Jenkins, M. P., was appointed "General Resident Agent of

⁷ Ibid., Sec. 2.

⁸ Ibid., Sec. 7 - 9.

the Dominion in London and Superintendent of Emigration".⁹ The cost of this agency was to be met by all the Canadian provinces. This centralized control of Canada's immigration agents remained much the same and then, in 1880, the Agency was brought under Canada's new High Commissioner's office.¹⁰ From this London headquarters, already in the 1870's, a vast network of immigration agents was spread throughout the United Kingdom and touching, at least, France, Belgium and Germany. The activities of these agents will form the subject matter of the next chapter.

The above arrangements made by the federal government to encourage immigration were too cumbersome to meet the needs of Manitoba in the first decade of its history. Nor could the provincial government do much to improve the situation. Unlike some of the Eastern Provinces, Manitoba could not afford to post immigration agents and the few other measures taken were not of much significance. One report noted that in 1871, the Manitoba government voted \$20,000. for the building of what were called "colonization roads". The same report referred to some \$2,000. that the province had set aside for the relief of "poor and suffering immigrants".¹¹ Dissatisfaction with this state of affairs and discontent over the federal

⁹Canada, Sessional Papers, 38 Vict., VIII, No. 40, (1875), "Report of the Minister of Agriculture for the Calendar Year 1874".

¹⁰Canada, Sessional Papers, 44 Vict., XIV, (1881), "Report of the Minister of Agriculture for the Dominion of Canada for the Calendar Year 1880".

¹¹Alexander Begg, History of the North-West, Vol. II, (Toronto: Hunter, Rose & Co., 1894), p. 95.

authorities' role in immigration was reflected in Manitoba's newspapers. Criticism was particularly bitter in the early 1870's. One editorial gave this advice on the better organization of an immigration policy:

It requires but a little common sense, a little administrative knack, and a little whole-heartedness in the work to place this whole matter in such a groove that it will not fail to run easily and of its own impetus.¹²

A simple request that the federal government was asked not to ignore was that the Immigration Agent for Manitoba be from Manitoba. But, due to a failure in communications, such requests usually went unheeded.

In general, the same difficulties that characterized the federal government's immigration plans showed up in its policy to settle the West. In both cases, the problem was one of achieving a greater harmony between means and ends. This was particularly true of the manner in which the federal authorities administered the lands they had acquired in Manitoba in 1870. The challenge which confronted Ottawa was how best to use this territory "for the purposes of the Dominion".¹³ To the Government of the day this phrase had the rather vague meaning that land was the one resource by which a British Dominion could be secured. Therefore, land was to be distributed in many ways. Chief amongst these were the offers

¹²The Standard, Nov. 28, 1874, p. 2.

¹³Canada, Statutes, 33 Vict., C. 3., Sec. 30, (1870), "An Act to establish and provide for the Government of the Province of Manitoba".

of 'free homesteads' and the grants to railway companies. While both were intended for the speedy settlement of the West, yet they often came into open conflict.¹⁴ Of the two, the 'free homesteads' had a much greater relevance to settlement in Manitoba in the 1870's.

The legal framework in which the homestead system operated was provided by The Dominion Lands Act of 1872. This Act, with all its subsequent amendments, dealt with most of the matters that pertained to land in the West - the nature of the survey, the extent of the Hudson's Bay Company grant and the division of lands into Hay Lands, Grazing Lands, Mining Lands, Timber Lands, School Lands, etc. The significant part of the Act for purposes of this study is Section 33, which set out the conditions by which the individual settler could obtain a homestead.

The homestead requirements, which were subject to frequent revisions, at first allowed that any person who was head of a family or who had attained the age of twenty-one years was able to apply for a homestead of 160 acres. The application was to be made with a local Land Agent, in surveyed districts, thirty days

¹⁴In the 1870's, some 1,900,000 acres of Manitoba were tied up as railway reserves. This land in the 'fertile belt' lay vacant while the early settlers often had much difficulty in locating a suitable homestead. Hence, Chester Martin's statement that railways and settlement went "hand in hand" and that the C. P. R. did much to promote the prosperity and permanent settlement of Western Canada, is only true of a period after 1881.

See: Chester Martin, "Dominion Lands Policy", Canadian Frontiers of Settlement, Vol. II, ed: W. A. Mackintosh & W. J. G. Joerg, (Toronto: The MacMillan Co. of Canada, Ltd., 1938), pp. 305 - 314.

after settlement; in unsurveyed districts, within three months after settlement. A ten dollar fee, payable to the local Agent insured the settlers' right to locate on his homestead. A patent was then granted after the expiration of three years. Disputed homestead rights were to be investigated by the local Agent and reported to the Secretary of State. Before securing a patent, the settler could be away from his land up to six months in any one year. Proof of actual settlement and of cultivation, prior to the issuing of a patent, required two witnesses' testimony before the local Agent. No transfer of homestead rights, before receiving a patent, were possible, and settlers could only make an application for a homestead once.¹⁵

The Dominion Lands Act of 1874 brought several important revisions to the above regulations. The age requirement for securing a homestead was changed to eighteen years and the opportunity to secure a pre-emption was provided. Pre-emption rights were available to a settler who, at the same time as making an entry for a homestead, also made "an interim entry for any adjoining quarter section then unclaimed".¹⁶ When the patent for the homestead would be granted the settler could purchase the adjoining quarter section at the "government price".¹⁷ Another innovation came with Section 14 of the Act. There the government's

¹⁵Canada, Statutes, 35 Vict., C. 23, (1872), "An Act respecting the Public Lands of the Dominion".

¹⁶Canada, Statutes, 37 Vict., C. 19, Sec. 8, Sub. 1 (1874), "An Act to amend the Dominion Lands Act".

¹⁷Ibid.

conditions for group settlement were outlined. An interested party of people who wished to take up homesteads side by side, without expense to the government, could obtain up to sixty-four homesteads in one township, for sixty-four families.¹⁸

These provisions in the Dominion Lands Acts of 1872 and 1874, remained, with slight modifications, the basis for securing 'free' land grants throughout the settlement period in the West. In 1879, the Dominion Lands Acts of the decade were consolidated and all previous amendments were added to the original. In 1881, with the virtual end of good homestead locations in Manitoba, and with a stronger interest in the completion of a trans-continental railway, a shift of emphasis in the government's "land policy" was made. A homestead system that appeared very generous had not brought the desired results. For the next decade, efforts were made to focus on the railway land grants. The homestead system remained but the value of land was increasingly determined by its proximity to a railway line.¹⁹

¹⁸This opened the way to the land speculator, who was to become a part of the Manitoba scenery in a later period. However, the few efforts that were made, in this direction, in the 70's showed a remarkable success. Apart from the two important ventures that included the Menmonite and the Icelandic reserves, two colonization syndicates planted successful settlements at Rapid City and on the Souris Plains, in 1877 and 1880, respectively.

¹⁹This was indicated in the "Dominion Lands Regulations" that were issued in 1882 and that divided the lands for settlement in the West into four classes, according to their distance from a railway line.

If the legalities for acquiring a homestead seemed very liberal, in practice many obstacles were encountered. One was the long and awkward process for obtaining a patent. In the 1870's, patent applications were sent by the local Agent to the Department of the Interior. There the patent was prepared and sent to the Minister of Justice, then to the Secretary of State, who sent it on to the Privy Council for the signature of the Governor-General, and, finally, it went to the Registrar. Before the homesteader received his patent much time had passed, during which his claim to land had not been secured. Not until the middle of the 1880's was the whole procedure confined to two departments - the local land agent and the Land Commissioner in Winnipeg.²⁰

The settlers faced even more serious problems in trying to locate lands available for homesteading. These problems were, primarily, the result of the many reservations that existed in Manitoba. James Trow, M. P., as Chairman of the Select Committee on Immigration and Colonization had toured Manitoba and the North-West Territories in the summer and fall of 1877. In his Report, he warned the government of the seriousness of "the various reservations in Manitoba ... (that) can only retard its progress".²¹ According to his estimates, the following areas had been reserved:

²⁰Norman Macdonald, op. cit., p. 174.

²¹James Trow, Manitoba and North West Territories, (Ottawa: published by the Department of Agriculture, 1878), p. 17.

one million four hundred thousand acres for the Metis, 1,900,000 acres for the railways, 500,000 acres for the Mennonites, 450,000 acres for the Hudson's Bay Company grant, and some 400,000 acres for educational purposes and Indian reservations.²² As Manitoba consisted of about nine million acres, the reserves occupied almost half of the province. This policy which came to be known as 'land-lock' did more than anything else to nullify the benefits of a liberal homestead law. The frustrations that it caused the settlers led to numerous outbursts. For example, the government was warned that English-speaking immigrants coming through Winnipeg in 1875 were expected to go beyond the province. This, because land in Manitoba was "too much tied up"²³, and because:

... control of affairs smacks too much of the old 'regime' to suit the taste of men who are accustomed to the more vigorous march of progress ...²⁴

But, in the 1870's, the federal government made little effort to remedy the situation.²⁵

Before leaving the land grant system that developed in Manitoba, some reference should be made to its American counter-

²²Ibid.

²³The Standard, May 1, 1875, p. 2.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Only the Metis reservations were removed towards the end of the decade.

part from which it borrowed so much. It was United States experience that had determined most of the federal government's attitude towards homesteading. The homestead system was used in the West after it had been tried and discredited in Ontario because of the hope that, as it had been successful in settling the Western States, so too, it would succeed on the Canadian prairies. More important, its acceptance signified the Canadian government's adoption of the American interest to preserve the West for individual rather than for group settlement. The American position has well been described as one by which:

... the immigrant was to enjoy no special privileges to encourage his coming; also he was to suffer no special restrictions.²⁶

This theme was evident in the first Dominion Lands Act.

In some matters, the Canadian authorities tried to improve upon the United States system. In several respects, the Canadian system showed itself as more liberal. Before 1879, American immigrants could get a homestead of only eighty acres and acquire eighty more by pre-emption. The prices for these pre-emptions ranged from \$1.25 to \$2.50 an acre, as compared with \$1.00 an acre in Canada. As well, in the United States a five years' residence was required before a patent could be obtained as compared with three in Canada.²⁷ In other areas there were many parallels. That more homesteaders did not retreat when hardships

²⁶Marcus Hansen, The Immigrant in American History, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948), p. 132

²⁷G. F. Stanley, The Birth of Western Canada, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), pp. 188 - 189.

beset them was due to a provision in the American law, which allowed the homesteader to spend up to six months in a year away from his homestead, earning much needed capital on railroads or in lumber camps. This same privilege was given a homesteader by Canadian law.²⁸ There were other general similarities. Both countries based the homestead on the same system of survey,²⁹ both saw it as a staple in their land administration, and finally, both used it as a weapon in the race for the Pacific.

In summary, these points can be made about the federal government's attempts to formulate an immigration and settlement policy. First, they represent the initial effort to provide a legal framework without which the settlement of the West might have been longer delayed. Second, they were accompanied by an optimism and an enthusiasm for which the time was not ready, and which did not bring the desired results. Third, they were largely based on the political needs of the Dominion and took little account of the actual situation that the settlers faced.

To Manitoba, these factors were to prove a mixed blessing. The large scale publicity that was given to its natural resources was accompanied by the alienation of some of its best lands. The coming of the land agents and the generous land grants also brought the land speculator. The offer of a 'free' homestead

²⁸Canada, Statutes, 35 Vict., C. 23, Sec. 33, Sub. 14, (1872), "An Act respecting the Public Lands of the Dominion".

²⁹William McDougall's plans for Canadian homesteads of 200 acres to compete with the American system, were short lived. Soon after 1870, the Canadian government adopted the American survey.

was coupled with the frustrations and disappointments of the early settler. These developments all helped to determine the pattern of immigration and settlement that evolved in Manitoba in its first decade.

CHAPTER II

The Search for the Immigrants

If the legal structure that the federal government had provided for immigration and settlement was to prove effective, it required an active campaign to seek out and encourage "desirable emigrants"¹ to come to the Canadian West. Such a campaign was launched by the federal government in the British Isles, in Northern Europe and, to some extent, in the United States, almost at the same time as the government adopted a "liberal land policy".² Soon after 1872, a variety of forces were set in motion. These included: the immigration agents both at home and abroad, and both public and private; the advertising by pamphlets and newspapers, and by hand-books and letters; the subsidized immigration by commissions to booking agents and by bonuses to 'desirable emigrants'; and the colonization schemes with their great hopes and their frequent disappointments. All these marked the beginnings of an effort that assumed increasing momentum as the 1870's progressed, and was to grow yet more elaborate in the decade and a half after 1881. While this effort was not intended for Manitoba alone, yet it had a special relevance to the opening of that province.

¹This term was to appear frequently in the immigration literature of the time.

²J. B. Hedges, Building the Canadian West - The Land and Colonization Policies of the C. P. R., (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1939), p. 11.

Hedges is referring to the Dominion Lands Act of 1872.

The rude origins of a Canadian immigration propaganda can be traced to a time before Manitoba entered into Confederation. The Allan Company had come into the field with the Canadian government and up to 1872 had even taken a leading part in the advertising of Canada. Then, for the remainder of the decade its work seems to have been confined to promoting the transportation of immigrants. It was only after 1881 and the formation of the C. P. R. Syndicate that a private agency again assumed much responsibility for Canadian immigration. In 1883, the Company organized its own immigration department and from this London headquarters it made a massive effort to increase the activities the Canadian government had begun, and to add many other interesting features.³

For most of the 1870's, then, the task of promoting immigration was left in the hands of the federal government's agents. If their work was to be successful, the choice of agents was an important consideration, more so than was generally realized. Alexander Begg, in Manitoba, sought to give the government some advice on the matter when he wrote:

³Amongst the features introduced by the C. P. R. were the following:

"Delegates" - who were prospective settlers sent to the West by the Company and who were to report their findings to their communities upon return.

"Return Men" - who were natives of the 'old country' that had settled in the West and who were sent 'home' by the Company to tell of their experiences in homesteading.

See: J. B. Hedges, op. cit., pp. 105 - 106.

... it will require a person of untiring assiduity, multiform knowledge, a pleasant and genial disposition, able to adapt himself to any class of society ... a knowledge of farming would be indispensable, and an intimate acquaintance with the old country as well as of the new, would add greatly to his efficiency.⁴

This was a rather tall order. Yet, in 1874, a move was made in the right direction. With the appointment of Edward Jenkins as Canada's Chief Emigration Agent in Europe, the loose control that had been exercised over Canada's immigration agents abroad came to an end. Under Jenkins' strong leadership all the agents in Europe and in the British Isles had to report directly to him rather than to the Minister of Agriculture. When the Canadian government felt that Jenkins was exercising too much authority, the Agency-General was ended in 1876. The work of immigration seems to have continued much as before until, in 1880, there came a complete re-organization of the central agency. With the appointment of Canada's first High Commissioner an Emigration Branch was to be located in his office.⁵

The many kinds of immigration agents in this period can be classified as domestic and foreign ones, and as permanent and temporary ones. For most of the jobs, there were always large

⁴An article, "Who Should be Emigration Agent in England?", The Manitoba Gazette, May 11, 1873.

⁵H. Gordon Skilling, Canadian Representation Abroad, (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1945), pp. 1 - 8.

numbers of applicants. The permanent positions required the applicants to pass a strict examination, while for the temporary appointments, knowing the right kind of people was all that mattered. The duties of the agents were many and varied. In Canada, their job was to visit the different sections of their districts; keep lists of lands available for sale, lease or rent; collect information regarding employment; direct newcomers to land or employment; warn immigrants against imposters; report on the numbers entering a district; and neutralize the adverse effects of United States propaganda. In the British Isles and Northern Europe, where the agents were situated in any region to which they could gain access, they had to be 'walking encyclopedias'.⁶ Their duties included advertising Canada, without giving direct advice to go there; exhibiting samples of Canadian products; displaying maps of all kinds; keeping a good Reference Room; making available information for sailing; and seeing that the Passenger Act was enforced.⁷

The selling of transportation tickets was not part of the immigration agent's work. This was left to the booking agents of the several steamship and railway companies. Like the immigration agents, these men were scattered throughout the villages and towns of the United Kingdom. The commissions they received from the transportation companies and from the Canadian government were granted only on tickets sold to 'desirable immigrants',

⁶N. Macdonald, Immigration and Colonization, p. 41.

⁷Ibid., pp. 38 - 41.

which meant farmers and agricultural or domestic servants. The commissions formed part of the Canadian government's subsidized immigration plan that, in 1872, paid to the booking agents six shillings, three pence per adult over the usual commission paid by steamship companies.⁸ This system led to considerable waste but was continued in some form until 1896.

On the Continent of Europe a general hostility to immigration work met the Canadian agents all through this time. This was especially evident in Germany.⁹ Yet an underground activity was carried on there with what were called "corresponding agents". These were usually the booking agents with their many sub-agents. After 1873, Canada opened another channel when it began advertising its opportunities in newspapers in the Scandinavian countries, in some parts of Germany, in Austria, and in Poland. Only in France was the case somewhat different. For most of the 1870's, Canada had a Special Immigration Agent posted there. He did not face the same official opposition as did agents in the other countries, but neither did he receive any encouragement. The reason for this, according to the Agent in 1878, was that more Frenchmen owned their soil than did British tenant farmers.¹⁰ A more likely reason was the little interest

⁸Ibid., pp. 45 - 47.

⁹In 1873, John Dyke, the Ontario agent, was jailed for his immigration work in Germany.

See: H. G. Skilling, op. cit., p. 21.

¹⁰Canada, Sessional Papers, 42 Vict., Vol. VII, (1879), "Report of the Minister of Agriculture for the Calendar Year, 1878".

the French then had in Canada.

To the United States, Canada first sent immigration agents between 1873 and 1874. These were to help repatriate former French Canadian citizens who had gone to the New England States. For this purpose, in 1875, Charles Lalime was appointed Canada's first resident agent in the United States at Worcester, Massachusetts. This effort, while of some significance, was yet very small compared to the attempts made to bring Anglo-Saxons to Manitoba. Nor did the official propaganda show the same enthusiasm.¹¹ After 1875, the work in the United States was rapidly extended. In 1876, Mr. Halvorsen was engaged in Chicago to inform people of Scandinavian descent about the opportunities in the Canadian West. Then, in 1877, agents were appointed at Detroit and Duluth. These were to facilitate the journey of the settlers heading for Manitoba, and to prevent American authorities from persuading them to stay in the United States.¹²

Conflicting opinion has arisen about the contribution the immigration agents made to the process of immigration and settlement. One authority has described the agents as "the most conspicuous and the least useful"¹³ of all the means employed to bring settlers to Canada. A more positive criticism presents them as:

¹¹See the discussion of 'colonization schemes' later in this chapter.

¹²H. G. Skilling, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

¹³N. Macdonald, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

... busy and active men, working with limited funds and few facilities, enjoying no special status or prestige, often subjected to an ill-informed and penny-pinching criticism at home, (while) pursu(ing) their objective of¹⁴ securing suitable settlers for Canada.

A fair assumption would be that, under the circumstances, the agents probably did as good a job as was possible. The widespread ignorance about Canada that they had to combat and the competition they met from representatives of other British dominions made their task a very difficult one. As well, to know success their work required long years of continuous effort. Instead, their jobs might be suddenly cut off. While actual numbers for immigration agents are difficult to find, one report indicated that, in 1873, there were thirty-five agents in the United Kingdom. Then, in 1874, due to the economic depression, that number decreased to four.¹⁵ As economic problems continued for Canada, the latter count seems not to have varied too much for the rest of the decade. For instance, in 1880, those wishing to immigrate to Canada are advised to seek out the help of one of five accredited agents, stationed at London, Liverpool, Glasgow, Belfast and Dublin.¹⁶ All this reflected an effort that was as yet very tentative.

The information and propaganda about immigration

¹⁴H. G. Skilling, op. cit., p. 4.

¹⁵N. Macdonald, op. cit., p. 42.

¹⁶John Macoun, Manitoba and the Great North-West: The Field for Investment; The Home of the Emigrant, (Guelph: The World Publishing Co. 1882), p. 622.

that appeared in the 1870's can be examined at several levels. There were the annual accounts submitted by the government's foreign and domestic agents, and included in the Minister of Agriculture's annual Reports. Then, there were the many pamphlets, maps and handbooks issued by public and private sources, and handled by the agents. Finally, there were the numerous efforts made to advertise Manitoba in a variety of ways, by both private organizations and private citizens.

The accounts prepared by the immigration agents stationed in Europe and in the British Isles were usually possessed with a spirit of optimism, and included many interesting personal observations. They also contained much repetitive material. They outlined Manitoba's soil and weather conditions, its acreage yields, what capital to bring and when to sail from the 'old country'. As well, they gave a good deal of statistical information that included the number of emigrants who registered at the Immigration Offices, the numbers that sailed via the St. Lawrence route and the numbers that were received at Emerson and Winnipeg.¹⁷ Such statistics, of course, were not complete as only those immigrants who came to the agent's attention were recorded.

The enthusiasm that often accompanied the agent's

¹⁷In the Report of the Minister of Agriculture for 1875, these statistics are included:

Immigration to Canada via the St. Lawrence Route	- 16,038
Entrants at West Lynne, Manitoba	- 1,096
Via the Dawson Route	- 38 people came to Manitoba

See: Canada, Sessional Papers, 39 Vict., Vol. IX, (1876), "Report of the Minister of Agriculture of Canada for the Calendar Year, 1875".

work was expressed, for example, by Angus Nicholson, Special Agent for the Highlands of Scotland in 1874. In one annual report he noted:

A great many people are looking towards Manitoba and I believe the Province is destined to become the chief field for Highland emigration at no distant day.¹⁸

At about the same time, the Agent for Belfast, who usually gave long and colorful accounts of his activities, saw much promise in his work at fairs, markets, race courses and even in railway carriages. His distribution of literature at all of these places, he felt, was well received and he was confident that the literature was being put to good use. His excitement even took him to the Quarter Sessions. The tales of distress that he heard there, arising from ejections by ruthless landlords, gave him further opportunity to solicit for immigrants.¹⁹ On the same positive note, in 1878, the Agent for Liverpool reviewed the list of passengers to go to Canada on each of the steamship lines in that year. He optimistically concluded:

A conspicuous and most gratifying feature of these returns is the increase in the number of cabin passengers, presumably emigrants with capital.²⁰

¹⁸Canada, Sessional Papers, 38 Vict., Vol. VIII, (1875), "Report of the Minister of Agriculture for the Calendar Year, 1874".

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Canada, Sessional Papers, 42 Vict., Vol. VII, (1879), "Report of the Minister of Agriculture for the Calendar Year, 1878".

Sometimes the agents' hopes were even more fantastic. There was Madame E. von Koerber, who was in charge of Female Emigration from Germany and Switzerland, and who, after her annual survey, gave this report to the Minister of Agriculture:

General emigration will follow and when the Ladies' Emigration Protective Committee have the work in hand, Canada can at all times ask for the supply of women she needs. ²¹

It was intended that these women would become wives for bachelors on homesteads in Manitoba and the North-West Territories. Yet, no evidence seems to exist of their coming. Similarly, there were the agents' rather absurd schemes to develop colonies in Manitoba. For instance, Thomas Grahame, Special Agent for Carlisle in 1878 recommended that Manitoba or the North-West set aside three to four townships for a Border Counties Colony. His reasoning was:

One of the greatest fears among many of the best classes for settlers in this country and especially among females, is that they would get into a new and wild country where they would know nobody, and that the people of the country would²² not be inclined to be friendly to them.

Such vague notions, unaccompanied by any practical plans, could hardly have successful results.

²¹Ibid. (The underlining appears in the original.)

²²Ibid.

The reports of the federal government's agents, who were stationed in Manitoba, were on a much more matter-of-fact basis. This was due to the situation in which the agents found themselves in the province. Before considering their annual accounts, it might be well to refer to that situation. In 1870, when immigration work in Manitoba needed much organization, the federal government was concentrating most of its efforts abroad. This, in spite of the frequent pleas by the province for more agents. The urgency of the situation was expressed by one of Manitoba's leading citizens when, in 1872, he requested:

... immediate appointment of Agents at Sault Ste. Marie, Detroit, Duluth, St. Paul and Pembina, whose duty it would be to attend to the forwarding of our immigrants without delay, to look after them and their goods, and to see that they are not imposed on by land sharks or by unscrupulous runners for land²³ speculating companies, etc., etc., ...

But it was not until 1873 that the first agents of significance were appointed for Manitoba.²⁴ In that year, the federal authorities made William Hespeler, Commissioner of Immigration and Agriculture at Winnipeg, and J. E. Tetu, Immigration Agent at Dufferin.

²³The Manitoba Gazette and Trade Review, April 13, 1872.

²⁴Apparently two agents, J. A. N. Provencher and Gilbert McMicken were appointed for Winnipeg and Fort Garry in 1872. However, their work does not seem to have been of much consequence.

See: The Year Book and Almanac of Canada for 1872, (Ottawa: James Bailiff and Co.), p. 166.

Mr. Hespeler's duties were to meet the immigrants at Winnipeg and to supply them with all necessary information and available assistance. These same duties were Mr. Tetus's at Emerson. As Manitoba settlements developed a few other agents were added from time to time. In 1875, F. T. Bradley reported as Agent for West Lynne and urged that an Immigration Shed be built there at once.²⁵ Thus, due to the harsh reality of the immigrants' problems and the scarcity of their own numbers, the immigration agents in Manitoba were too busy to devise dubious plans.

The accounts that the Manitoba agents did submit were usually good summaries of the immigration picture in that province for any one year. A typical account was one Mr. Hespeler gave at the end of 1874. In it he noted the following: the immigration season had started on May 12th of that year, the first lot of immigrants included many labourers and mechanics, the resulting glut on the labour market was eased by the provincial government's construction of Public Buildings, the Immigrant Sheds had been filled from July 1st until the close of the navigation season, most of the immigrants of that year had come from the United States and Ontario, and, finally, an important feature of the immigration season had been the arrival of 258 Mennonite families.²⁶

Of even more interest, perhaps, are the statistical reports that the Manitoba agents prepared. While their statistics

²⁵Canada, Sessional Papers, 38 Vict., Vol. VIII, (1875), "Report of the Minister of Agriculture for the Calendar Year, 1874".

²⁶Ibid.

were only approximate, they are yet a good indicator of the size and the variations in the immigration. For example, in the year 1875, Mr. Bradley at West Lynne reported some 6,034 people came to Manitoba. At Winnipeg, Mr. Hespeler had counted only 968, plus 4,830 Mennonites.²⁷ This suggested that a good number of immigrants did not reach Winnipeg, but headed west from the border. In the next year, Mr. Tetu reported some 348 immigrants from the United States, 42 from the Canadian provinces and 1,349 from Europe. These numbers, beside Mr. Hespeler's count, brought the total for the year to approximately 3,000 immigrants.²⁸ The depressed economic conditions that had steadily grown worse were believed to be the reason for this decline. For the entire decade, the figures that show the size and fluctuations in the immigration to Manitoba are as follows:²⁹

1871 - 1,500	1876 - 2,869
1872 - 1,400	1877 - 6,511
1873 - No Report	1878 - 7,401
1874 - 2,045	1879 - 3,913
1875 - 6,034	1880 - 10,180
1881 - 23,587	

These figures, supplied by the Manitoba agents, provided the basis from which the federal authorities could calculate the results of

²⁷Canada, Sessional Papers, 39 Vict., Vol. IX, (1876), "Report of the Minister of Agriculture for the Calendar Year, 1875".

²⁸Canada, Sessional Papers, 40 Vict., Vol. IX, (1877), "Report of the Minister of Agriculture for the Calendar Year, 1876".

²⁹These figures were taken from a "Report of the Department of Agriculture in the Canada Sessional Papers, 1872 - 1881".

their immigration program. For Manitoba, they showed the program's apparent lack of success.

In the search for the 'desirable emigrant', the profusion of immigration literature that made its appearance in the 1870's was probably of more importance than the information supplied by the immigration agents. This was the material that was widely circulated and that came to the attention of many prospective settlers. A quick survey of the literature indicates, first, that it was directed at Anglo-Saxons or, at least, at Nordic people, and second, that it made its strongest appeal to the tenant farmer or the agricultural labourer who had some capital.

The Department of Agriculture's official Handbook of Information for Intending Emigrants made a strong attempt to arouse the patriotism of Englishmen with this proclamation:

England is a great civilizer; the
mighty colonizer of the world,
This is part of England's destiny,
the work³⁰ that, as a nation she must
perform.

Such an appeal, in more or less subtle tones, was common to most of the immigration propaganda. Acton Burrows, a Manitoba citizen with land to sell to immigrants, had published his own pamphlet. In it he was careful to remind his readers that in his province:

³⁰Canada - A Handbook of Information for Intending Emigrants,
(Ottawa: Department of Agriculture, 1877), p. 73

... there is ... a careful preservation of those traditions which give the general features to English society which are found the world over.³¹

Even more encouragement was given by J. W. Down, the Englishman, who in 1876 was sent by the Canadian authorities to tour Manitoba. In his report he urges the English tenant farmer:

... pluck up your spirits and cross the Atlantic, and go to Manitoba. It is only 20 days journey from England, you will be still under the old flag, and you, sons of Britannia, may build up another and greater England in the Dominion of Canada.³²

On the Manitoba scene, this enthusiasm for the creation of an Anglo-Saxon province found strong expression in the local newspapers. The Manitoban, in 1871, printed this categorical statement:

A British colony to be prosperous must be colonised by Britains.³³

While these challenges were being directed at the prospective Anglo-Saxon immigrant, other efforts were being made to arouse the interest of agricultural people of Nordic stock. One official publication was impressively entitled: 'Mittheilungen

³¹ Acton Burrows, Northwestern Canada, its Climate, Soil and Production with a Sketch of its Natural Features and Social Condition, (H. S. Donaldson & Brother, 1880), p. 33.

³² from 'a report on colonisation in Manitoba'

See: Canada, Sessional Papers, 40 Vict., Vol. X, (1877), "Report of the Minister of Agriculture for the Calendar Year, 1876".

³³ The Manitoban, Sept. 23, 1871.

uber Nordwest Territorium (Nordamerika) fur Capitalisten Landwirthe, Handwerker, gewohnliche Arbeiter, Deintsboten, etc. unter besonderer Berucksichtigung der Deutschen Ansiedler".³⁴ This pamphlet drew attention to the 200 million acres that were available in the Canadian West and that to an individual German immigrant meant: "eine freie Heimstatts".³⁵ This pamphlet was one of several to be issued in German, as well as in Swedish, Norwegian and Dutch.

The interest in the Anglo-Saxon or Nordic immigrant went hand-in-hand with the concern for the agrarian settler who had some capital. This concern found expression in a variety of ways. The Canadian government pamphlet of 1877 listed "The Proper Classes to Settle in Canada" and placed first this description:

The most suitable people to try their fortunes in Canada are farmers with capital.³⁶

Sometimes the call was more sensational. One publication carried the title: Land of Immeasurable Promise - Manitoba and the North-West; Happy Home for Millions Secured by Tickling the Rich Prairie Soil.³⁷

³⁴"Information on the North West Territories of North America, for Capitalists, Farmers, Skilled Labourers, Unskilled Labourers, Servants, etc., - and, especially, for the consideration of the German Settler" (trans.)

³⁵"A free homestead" (trans.)

³⁶Canada, A Handbook of Information, p. 76.

³⁷While this pamphlet was issued by the Winnipeg Daily Sun without a date, it belongs to this period.

Many pamphlets held out the hope that the agrarian classes of the British Isles could escape suffering. Such an appeal was made to:

... the hardy Highland cotter, dragging out a miserable existence; ... the English or Irish tenant farmer, paying enough annually in poor rates and taxes to purchase him a farm in Manitoba; (and the farm labourer and female servant, slaving away their lives for a scanty pittance, ...³⁸

For this purpose the immigration propoganda placed a great deal of emphasis on the homestead. This meant 160 acres of 'free land' that needed little or no clearing but that still was within reach of timber. Much was also made of the richness of the prairie soil and Professor Emmerling's analysis³⁹ (which few immigrants would probably appreciate) was always included in the propoganda.

To the above information were added some incredible statements: wheat could be taken off the prairies fifty years in a row without fertilizing, or cattle that was fattened in Manitoba could be driven to St. Paul "without loss of weight".⁴⁰ Even

³⁸J. M. Trow, M. P., Manitoba and the North-West Territories, (Ottawa: The Department of Agriculture, 1878), p. 31.

³⁹Prof. Emmerling of Kiel University sent this analysis of Manitoba prairie soil to Senator Emil Klotz in a letter dated April, 1872. The analysis in 100.000 parts is as follows:

Potash - 228.7	Magnesia	- 16.1
Lime - 682.6	Phosphoric Acid	- 69.4
Sodium - 33.8	Nitrogen	- 486.1

On the basis of this analysis Manitoba soil was very fertile. See: Description of the Province of Manitoba (Hon. T. M. Daly, Minister of the Interior, 1893).

⁴⁰Canada - A Handbook of Information, p. 47.

Manitoba's climate became the subject of exaltation. Thomas Spence, while Clerk of the Legislative Assembly in Manitoba, wrote an immigration pamphlet in which he made this statement on the matter:

The dryness of the air, the character of the soil, which retains no stagnant pools to send forth poisonous exhalations, and the almost total absence of fog or mist, the brilliancy of its sunlight, the pleasing succession of its seasons, all conspire to make Manitoba a climate of unrivalled salubrity and to make this the home of a joyous, healthy, prosperous people, strong in physical, intellectual and moral capabilities.⁴¹

There was other propoganda that dealt much more in practicalities and was usually of much more value to immigrants. Such was the information that was published under the title: Best Time to go and what Capital to Commence With. This information had been prepared by Joseph Shantz, who unlike other pamphleteers, had experience in farming. He also had helped the first Mennonite settlers to adjust to agriculture in Manitoba. His recommendations were that the 'best time' to go to Manitoba was to get there so as to be 'on the land' by June 1st. At that time, the settler should plant 'a patch of potatoes' and do the ploughing for next year's crops. The amount of capital needed 'to start comfortably' Shantz estimated to be \$465. But, to the immigrant of more limited means, he gave this advice:

⁴¹Thomas Spence, Useful and Practical Hints for the Settler on the Canadian Prairie Lands, (Ottawa: The Office of the Minister of Agriculture, 1881), p. 25.

... I would remark that a poor man can adopt the mode of farming on a small scale for the commencement, as practised by the half-breeds.⁴²

Shantz may have been minimizing the expenses and difficulties of setting up a homestead. Private sources frequently acknowledged that official publications were seriously underestimating the costs of farming in the West.⁴³

While the interest in the agrarian settler remained foremost, this did not mean the exclusion of all other classes of immigrants. In the 1870's, Manitoba needed capitalists with money to invest in real estate and mortgages; skilled craftsmen in the carpentry, boot-making and tailoring trade; and, not least of all, domestic servants. One propaganda article noted that "marriageable girls were much sought after".⁴⁴ (The hope was that domestic servants would include 'marriageable girls'!) The classes of immigrants that were discouraged included lawyers, doctors and teachers. These professional people, Manitoba did not need as immediately, or as obviously, as the farmer and craftsman.

⁴²from Shantz's pamphlet as quoted by James Trow, Manitoba and the North-West, p. 87.

⁴³One private pamphlet indicated that something more like \$1,500. to \$2,000. was needed to start homesteading. This is probably more accurate, at least, for a 'comfortable start'.

See: Remarks on Manitoba and the North-West by a four-year's resident, (Winnipeg: Steam Book and Job Printing House, 1884), p. 13

⁴⁴Acton Burrows, Northwestern Canada, p. 76.

In addition to all the pamphlets and publications that were used to spread immigration propaganda, several other efforts were made, in this period, to encourage settlement in Manitoba. Lord Lorne, while visiting the province, made an eloquent speech in which he placed this challenge before Englishmen:

While Manitoba calls out for hundreds of thousands of settlers, no Englishman with love of land, but without a desire to forswear English preferences, need be at a loss to choose where to seek new homes and carve out new careers.⁴⁵

There were also the messages carried in Ontario newspapers. The Toronto Globe had a special correspondent "meandering through Manitoba in a buckboard";⁴⁶ the London Times had "an able writer and observer in the territories"⁴⁷ - all telling the same story of a land of promise.

Similarly, in the early 1870's, Archdeacon McLean of Ottawa lectured to Ontario audiences on the benefits of migrating to the West.⁴⁸ A yet more vivid approach was used by the Portage la Prairie man who went to display Manitoba products at an agricultural show in Galt, Ontario. He proudly showed off wheat that had produced thirty-two bushels an acre, a 'Red River potato' and

⁴⁵Manitoba Daily Free Press, Sept. 28, 1881.

⁴⁶Manitoba Daily Free Press, Sept. 23, 1881.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸The Manitoba Gazette, April 2, 1873.

even some 'Red River grasshoppers' well preserved in spirits! Such a presentation was meant to "drive facts home far more effectually than all the talking and speechifying in the world".⁴⁹ Then there were yet the letters written to friends 'back home' or the stories told by returning settlers. While not much evidence of these any longer exists, they gave, probably, the best encouragement and guidance to the European immigrant, contemplating the hazardous crossing of the Atlantic, or to the Ontario settler, facing the difficult 'trek' to a new frontier.

Finally, there are the colonization schemes that were organized to bring settlers to Manitoba, in this decade. These were, frequently, attempts to achieve success where other efforts had failed. While some of the schemes did show significant results they were more often exaggerated plans that could not cope with the problems they faced or did not recognize the realities around them.

The two colonies that showed most success were the Mennonite and Icelandic ones. While both of these ventures had their origins in other than Canadian government plans, yet they were promoted and assisted by the federal authorities. When, in the early 1870's, the Dominion government heard of the Mennonites' desire to leave Russia, it dispatched William Hespeler, a Canadian German, to that country. There, as special immigration agent and under threat of arrest, he managed to give the Mennonites much useful information about the Canadian prairies. Then, in 1873,

⁴⁹The Manitoba Gazette, Nov. 27, 1872.

a Mennonite delegation visited Manitoba with the aim of locating suitable colonies. While this delegation was not favourably impressed, it did pave the way for the coming of some 1,400 Mennonite families to Manitoba in the next two years.⁵⁰ In return for certain guarantees that the Mennonites felt they had received from the Canadian government,⁵¹ they occupied two large reserves of Manitoba territory.⁵² There, the rapid and effective adaptation they made to Manitoba farm life shows, probably, the best effort at settlement in Manitoba in this period.

The story of the Icelanders is somewhat parallel. The Canadian authorities knew of their depressed economic conditions that had been made worse by a huge volcano that hit Iceland in early 1875. Therefore, the government sent two immigration agents to that country, and published an immigration pamphlet in Icelandic.⁵³

⁵⁰While the coming of Mennonites to Manitoba continued until 1879, the largest number had arrived by the end of 1875.

See: C. A. Dawson, "Group Settlement: Ethnic Communities in Western Canada", Canadian Frontiers of Settlement, Vol. VII, ed. W. A. MacKintosh and W. L. G. Joerg, (Toronto: The MacMillan Co. of Canada, Ltd., 1936), p. 102.

⁵¹The letter that John S. Lowe, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture gave to the Mennonites in 1873, was for them a guarantee of freedom of conscience and total military exemption. That it did not provide these only became evident later.

See: E. K. Francis, In Search of Utopia, (Altona: D. W. Friesen & Sons Ltd., 1955), pp. 45 - 47.

⁵²The East Reserve consisted of eight townships, east of the Red River and thirty-five miles south-east of Winnipeg. The West Reserve held seventeen townships, west of the Red River and along the international boundary.

Ibid., pp. 112 - 113.

⁵³W. Kristjanson, The Icelandic People in Manitoba - A Manitoba Saga, (Winnipeg; Wallingford Press, 1965), p. 43.

In October, 1875, the first group of Icelanders arrived in Winnipeg and included some 285 people.⁵⁴ Under the able supervision of John Taylor, a prominent citizen from Eastern Canada, and of Lord Dufferin, then Governor-General of Canada, these people settled in a colony that was soon to become part of Manitoba.⁵⁵ Their early experiences in the province, while not as successful as the Mennonites, were to provide the basis for an important Manitoba settlement.

A third effort of some significance was made to set up French Canadian colonies. In 1874, the Colonisation Society of Manitoba was founded in St. Boniface. Its purpose was to encourage and assist French Canadian immigration from Quebec and from the New England States. Archbishop Tache, as the Society's honorary president, together with leading citizens of Manitoba's French Canadian community, showed much concern that this work should succeed.⁵⁶ As well, the federal government posted an agent in the

⁵⁴S. J. Somerville, "Early Icelandic Settlement in Canada", a paper read before the Historical & Scientific Society of Manitoba, Series III (Winnipeg: Advocate Printers Ltd., 1945), p. 26.

⁵⁵The Icelandic Reserve included six townships, twelve miles west of Lake Winnipeg and all of Big Island. This area after 1881 was included inside the Manitoba boundary.

Ibid., pp. 26 - 28.

⁵⁶Tache was anxious to safeguard the French language and Roman Catholic religion in Manitoba. To do this he increasingly realized that he had to do something to offset the influx of Ontario settlers to Manitoba. In his concern, he was supported by M. Girard, Joseph Royal and Joseph Dubuc - all outstanding political leaders in Manitoba in the 1870's.

See: Sister M. Jean-Augustin, "Douze Annees d'Immigration Francaise au Manitoba, 1870 - 1882", an unpublished M. A. thesis (University of Ottawa, 1950), pp. 15 - 16.

New England States. His role was to try and repatriate French Canadians by offering them an advance on their railroad fares, travel to Manitoba in conducted parties and assistance in the acquisition of farms.⁵⁷

The above propoganda was fundamentally different from that placed before Anglo-Saxon immigrants. It made no promises of promoting a French Canadian society. And the patriotic appeals of the Colonisation Society seemed to fall on deaf ears. For those French Canadians wishing to leave Quebec, the United States offered much closer and more immediate opportunities. While, for the French Canadians of the New England States, apart from the occasional economic set-back, prosperity was the principal deterrent to any mass repatriation. At the end of the 1870's, the Colonisation Society saw that its hopes had been frustrated.⁵⁸

Other smaller schemes to colonize Manitoba were to appear in this decade. Such plans were laid both in Canada and in the British Isles. As an example, Colonel Shaw of Glasgow tried to organize the British Canadian Land Settlement Company in 1874.

⁵⁷This agent was Charles Lalime stationed at Worcester, Mass.

See: Marcus L. Hansen and John B. Brebner, The Mingling of the Canadian and American People, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), pp. 177 - 178.

⁵⁸The proportion of French Canadians who came to Manitoba in this period, as compared to other settlers, is seen in the following figures:

In 1870, Manitoba had 11,963 people, of which 5,757 were French Canadians. In 1881, Manitoba had 62,260 people, of which 9,949 were French Canadians.

See: Canada: Sessional Papers, (1887), "Report of the Department of Agriculture".

His intention was that the Company pay the passage money of suitable immigrant families and supply them with food, seed and implements until their first crop in Manitoba would be ready. Then the Company would share the crop of a limited number of acres until the settler had paid off his indebtedness. At such time, the settler got a free deed to his land and all that was on it. This plan was called "comprehensive and liberal",⁵⁹ but it offered no special inducements for the settler who could obtain a 160 acre homestead almost free. Consequently, the scheme seems to have fallen by the wayside. Its fate was that of many similar ventures.

To assess the entire effort made to foster immigration in this period, is difficult. Such statistics as exist reveal that the federal government's expenditures for this purpose were substantial. (See Appendix A) Most of this money seems to have been spent in the efforts that were made abroad.⁶⁰ As well, large amounts of money must have gone into the publication of the numerous pamphlets. One account indicates that at the end of 1872, some 1,850,000 pamphlets had already been published.⁶¹ Yet all these

⁵⁹The Manitoba Daily Free Press, July 29, 1874.

⁶⁰Some breakdown is given for the amounts spent on the agencies in the North-West. As a sample, there are the following figures:

1871 - \$1,292.20	1873 - \$3,672.75
1872 - 2,822.66	1874 - 2,638.35

See: Canada, Sessional Papers, 38 Vict., Vol. VIII, (1875), "Report of the Minister of Agriculture for the Calendar Year, 1874".

⁶¹No costs of this material are given. It is suggested that much of it lay dumped in the agencies cellars where it lay undisturbed for years.

See: N. Macdonald, op. cit., p. 32.

activities failed to show significant results.⁶² There were several reasons for this. One was that they had to wait for better times. In the 1870's, they were faced with difficult economic conditions both at home and abroad and they felt the strong competition of the United States. Another reason was the experimental nature that the immigration propaganda still showed. It made a massive and often futile effort abroad but failed to realize the importance of the work at home.

To the pattern of immigration and settlement that emerged in Manitoba, the search for immigrants seemed to make little effective contribution. At the most, it helped to formulate the focus of the pattern; it could not insure the pattern's success.

⁶²For the number of people that came to Manitoba in each year, between 1871 and 1881, see p. 27.

CHAPTER III

The Problems of Transportation

Those who had succumbed to the temptations offered by the immigration propaganda, or who simply felt the challenges of a new frontier, were faced with a long and difficult journey to Manitoba. In the 1870's, the transportation facilities that these immigrants found were usually very crude, or even conspicuous for their absence. And improvements were only slowly and hesitatingly made. At least until the end of the 19th Century, the dirty and unseaworthy ship, the crowded and dingy railway car, and the hazardous flat-bottomed boat, were all part of the risk that immigrants took when coming to the Canadian West.

The European emigrant had a much longer and more trying voyage than did his counterpart from Eastern Canada. Often he was ill-equipped for the dangers involved. Nor could he rely much on the advice he was given. Canadian government publications presented him with this kind of optimistic prospect:

Passengers may go to Canada with ease and comfort. The voyage is a short one, from eight to ten days, the steamships are of the very best class, and the wants and welfare of the passengers are carefully and constantly looked (a)fter. In fact, it is little else than a pleasure trip on a large scale.¹

The steamship companies would add their enticements to the above.

¹Canada - A Handbook of Information, p. 82.

The Dominion Line, which was recommended after the Allan Line, carried this advertisement about its ships:

(Our) steamers are fitted with Electric Light throughout, have Saloons, State Rooms, Music Rooms, Smoking Room and Bathroom² amidship where least motion is felt ...

For most immigrants all this could not mean much as they were not able to do better than travel Steerage Class. One count taken in 1874 on several vessels that belonged to the Allan Line and that sailed from Liverpool to Quebec, showed the "Sarmatian" carried sixty-three cabin passengers as compared with 596 Steerage ones; the "Manitoban" had no cabin passengers, but 358 Steerage ones; and the "Prussian" had 72 cabin passengers with 508 Steerage ones.³

Various impressions of the ships and of the ocean crossing have been left by the passengers. Those who could afford to travel Saloon class might well be amused by the experience. This was evident in the account given by one Liverpool lady who came out in this decade to see her brother on a farm in Manitoba. While on board ship, she made these notes:

²J. G. Colmer, Across the Canadian Prairies, (London: The European Mail Ltd., 1895), p. 6.

³Canada, Sessional Papers, 40 Vict., Vol. VIII, (1875), "Report of the Minister of Agriculture for the Calendar Year, 1874".

Our spirits have not flagged as, thanks to various small games such as pitch-and-toss, running races when the ship was rolling, quoits and cards, we have not found time unbearably long.⁴

A somewhat different picture was given by one of the many poorer immigrants. Her ship that was used to take Icelandic passengers across:

... the stormiest of northern seas was a disreputable tub, called "Kamoens", that creaked in every timber, and was otherwise remarkable for its distinctive trade odours.⁵

This ship had been used to transport horses! From Glasgow, the Icelanders were put on an Allan liner, which had little more to commend it except that "it was larger, less dirty and quite seaworthy."⁶ Inside this vessel four families (of any size) occupied each cabin. In the latter were four empty bunks and a "bare board table".⁷ The food given to the passengers would consist of "meagre rations of beef and badly baked bread".⁸ Those in the Steerage Class had to supply their own eating and drinking utensils, as well as their bed and bedding. To add to

⁴(Mrs.) Cecil Hall, A Lady's Life on a Farm in Manitoba, (London: W. H. Allan & Co., 1884), p. 4.

⁵Laura G. Salverson, Confessions of an Immigrant's Daughter, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1939), p. 100.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

the problems, a ship might be lost at sea for weeks on end. During this time food supplies ran very low or 'ship's fever' struck, taking a heavy toll of the emaciated lives.

Even under normal circumstances the time that it took to cross the Atlantic could be only given approximately. In 1874, it was estimated that a journey from Liverpool to Quebec on an Allan liner would take eleven and a half days; from Glasgow to Quebec, thirteen and a half days; and from London to Quebec, via the Temperley line, twenty-two and three-quarters days.⁹ The fare from a British port to Quebec varied somewhat with the class taken. In 1880, Saloon Class fares ranged from £10 to £18, the Intermediate Class was £8.8s., and the Steerage passengers paid about £6.6s.¹⁰ In 1872, upon advice from many quarters, the Canadian government had made an arrangement with the Allan line to provide "assisted passages" to immigrants. This meant immigrants had to apply to the federal government's agents for passenger warrants of £4.5s. In the following year, a special arrangement was added to attract families of indigent agricultural labourers or female domestic servants, by offering them warrants of £2.5s.¹¹ These

⁹Canada, Sessional Papers, 38 Vict., Vol. VIII, (1875), "Report of the Minister of Agriculture for the Calendar Year, 1874".

¹⁰A Year in Manitoba, 1880 - 1881, Being the Experience of a Retired Officer in Settling His Sons, (London: W. R. Chambers, 1882), pp. 110 - 111.

¹¹Canada, Sessional Papers, 35 Vict., Vol. VIII, (1875), "Report of the Minister of Agriculture for the Calendar Year, 1874".

efforts to provide reduced fares were especially intended to bring large numbers of certain types of immigrants to Manitoba and the North-West Territories.

With the passenger warrants, the Canadian government was able to compete better for 'desirable emigrants' with New Zealand, Australia and the United States. These countries were even offering free transportation to the above kind of immigrants. Yet it is estimated that a fairly large number took advantage of the Canadian situation. In 1872, some 38,500 people came to Canada on "assisted passages"; in 1873, some 9,612 people; and in 1874, some 11,042 people.¹² This policy was continued throughout the decade. Another method that was added to secure the right kind of immigrants for Manitoba was to advise them to purchase through-tickets. The rate from London or Liverpool to Winnipeg, for passengers on warrants, was £9.10s. and for Saloon Class passengers, £28.¹³

All of these efforts made by the Canadian government did not seem to be enough. In 1875, Edward Jenkins, Canada's Agent-General for immigration work abroad issued a Report based on careful investigation. His conclusions were that most of the English agricultural classes could not afford the passenger warrants. The real situation showed that:

¹²Canada, Sessional Papers, 35 Vict., Vol. VIII, (1875), "Report of the Minister of Agriculture for the Calendar Year, 1874".

¹³A Year in Manitoba, 1880 - 1881, p. 111.

So reduced in circumstances (were) most of these people that they (could not) even afford to pay their railway fares to the port of embarkation.¹⁴

The Canadian authorities did not seem to recognize the implications. Had they seen their way to supplying free transportation for these people, they might well have brought many more immigrants to Manitoba in this decade.

The assistance that was given destitute passengers in the ports of embarkation or upon arrival was the responsibility of groups such as the British Agricultural Union; of various charity organizations; and of the Dominion government's agents. While in the British ports the help given was sometimes substantial, for the most part immigrants were on their own when they arrived in Quebec. After that, if they were well enough, they took a train to Toronto and then started an often more difficult journey to the West.

From Eastern Canada, the European and Ontario settlers followed the same routes to Manitoba. The stories of their trips are ones both of hardship and of romance. The "first batch of immigrants"¹⁵ arrived in Winnipeg on April 26, 1871. These were Ontario people that had behind them a four weeks journey by rail, wagon and flat-boat. At Fort Abercrombie, in the United

¹⁴Canada, Sessional Papers, 35 Vict., Vol. VIII, (1875), "Report of the Agent-General, London, Jan. 1, 1875".

¹⁵Alexander Begg, History of the North-West, Vol. II, p. 87.

States, they had bought lumber to build the boat that was to transport them down the Red River. Then "having victualled their craft, (they) waited patiently for the breaking up of the ice!".¹⁶ When open water appeared they floated downstream with the running ice, often cutting a channel with their axes through the ice jams. At night-time, soaked with rain and half-frozen, they would camp in a snowbank. During the day, they relied on fish, ducks and prairie chickens for food. When they arrived in Winnipeg, their journey ended and they sold their flat-boat for lumber.¹⁷

As the period continued, these first haphazard arrangements slowly gave way to more established transportation lines. Of the four routes that were opened between Manitoba and Eastern Canada, the two most popular were the rail and water routes. These went through both Canadian and American territory and were the same except that they started in Collingwood or Sarnia. They travelled via the Great Lakes to Duluth, then by rail to Moorhead and from there by stage coach or steamer to Winnipeg. (After 1878, the latter section was also covered by railway.) A third route that was probably the best but the most expensive, was the all-rail one that went via Detroit, Chicago and St. Paul to Winnipeg. On the first two lines, seventy-five dollars covered the fare and all expenses. For the third route the total charges were about \$100.¹⁸ These represented considerable costs for the settlers and there does not seem to have been

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 87 - 88.

¹⁸The Manitoba Gazette, April 23, 1873.

much government help available.¹⁹

The journey through United States territory was made somewhat easier for the immigrants by the posting of Canadian government agents at Duluth. A main function of these agents was to protect the immigrants from the American agents who tried to persuade prosperous Canadians to buy land in Minnesota or Dakota territory. One of the duties of the Canadian agents was to act as bondsmen and to assist the immigrants in the transfer of their belongings from steamboat to railroad. As well, they could direct weary settlers to the Reception House that the Canadian authorities maintained in Duluth.

The experiences that the immigrants had on their trip led to various reports. One optimistic traveller concluded that:

... the hardships to be endured are only trifling and nothing more than what any lady in ordinary health can easily undergo;...²⁰

A more detailed and less favourable description was given by a retired English army officer who, at this time, was bringing his sons to settle in Manitoba. For him, the long journey of 1000 miles,

¹⁹James Trow mentions in his pamphlet that immigrants could apply to government agents for relief from these rates, on the International and Grand Trunk Railways. He does not indicate how much the relief was, nor is there much evidence that settlers took advantage of the offer.

See: J. Trow, Manitoba and the North-West, p. 9.

²⁰The Manitoba Gazette, April 23, 1873.

six-hundred of them by water was, "for speed, safety, comfort, and elegance",²¹ very disappointing. The beauty of the scenery at the several stops was more than off-set by the uncivility of the servants aboard the Great Lakes steamers. The army officer's worst memory is of the steward who was "a priggish young fellow, always with a cigar in his mouth and his gold laced cap on the side of his head".²² The steward's most serious offence was to sit beside the officer's wife:

... and talk with the most perfect equality, and all the snubbing one could give him, scarce restrained his impertinence.²³

After that came the trying railway journey from St. Vincent to St. Boniface, of which the army officer gave this description:

It is a miserable apology for railway travelling ... We were more fortunate, however, than many, as our train did not run off the track - a misadventure that at this period was happening almost daily.²⁴

The less sophisticated immigrants were afflicted by other evils. The local press in Manitoba carried numerous complaints of swindles that, frequently, were carried out between Duluth and

²¹A Year in Manitoba, 1880 - 1881, p. 17.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid., p. 18.

²⁴Ibid., p. 22.

Winnipeg. For example, innocent immigrants would be lured into buying horses only to find they could not get them through the Customs.²⁵ Then there were the card sharks, the gamblers and the con-men who lay in wait for the immigrant that was anxious to make some 'fast money'. To warn the gullible, such statements as the following appeared often in The Manitoba Daily Free Press:

Immigrants, Beware! Fisher's Landing, the port of embarkation on the Red River steamers for Manitoba, is again infested with Farmer Brown and associates, whose avocation is to rob travellers of card tricks. In past seasons, despite cautions from many quarters, scores of Manitoba immigrants played their money into the hands of sharpers ... Our Canadian exchanges would be doing a patriotic service by republishing this item.²⁶

Finally, there were the serious accidents and tragedies that sometimes befell the immigrants' journey. One report in early 1880 tells of a party of Ontario settlers whose carload of livestock caught fire and was totally destroyed. On the same trip, four cars on the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba railroad were derailed and one was destroyed, killing an immigrant.²⁷ Such hardships were the lot of some who sought new opportunities in the Canadian West.

The fourth route that was provided for settlers

²⁵The Manitoba Daily Free Press, Feb. 9, 1877.

²⁶The Manitoba Daily Free Press, April 25, 1877.

²⁷The Manitoba Daily Free Press, April 30, 1880.

coming to Manitoba at this time deserves some separate attention. It was the one all-Canadian route and had grown out of the plans laid by the federal authorities in the early 1870's to secure a land and water road to the Red River on British soil. The route took its name from Simon J. Dawson of the Dawson-Hind expedition who, in 1873, proposed "The Shortest Route for a Railway between Lake Superior and Fort Garry".²⁸ Specifically, the route consisted of a forty-five mile cart road from Thunder Bay to Lake Shebandowan, 310 miles of broken navigation and a ninety-five mile road from Winnipeg to Pointe de Chene. A contract for the upkeep of the road and for the conveyance of passengers and goods in the summer months was let by the Canadian government in the early 1870's. In addition to a very generous subsidy that they received from the government,²⁹ the contractors were able to charge fares of ten dollars an adult and five dollars a child. As well, at wayside stations along the route, the company was to provide meals for thirty cents.³⁰

The role that this route played in the settlement of Manitoba was a disappointing one. The authorities in the province had eagerly anticipated the route as one that would provide cheaper transportation and thus bring more immigrants to the West. Instead, there were the many tales of woe. The

²⁸J. C. Hamilton, The Prairie Province; Sketches of Travel from Lake Ontario to Lake Winnipeg, (Toronto: Belford Brothers, 1876), pp. 117 - 135.

²⁹The subsidy amounted to \$76,000. annually.
Ibid., p. 117.

³⁰Ibid.

passengers that arrived in Winnipeg were suffering from great fatigue after a fifteen to twenty-one days journey. They were half-starved and, sometimes, most of their belongings had been destroyed by leaky boats and exposure to weather. They reported that they had often to carry their own luggage over the portages or work on the boats. On land they were jolted along in lumber wagons over corduroy roads, or were forced to walk where no wagons were provided.³¹ To show his disgust, one traveller gave these impressions of this trip to the editor of The Manitoba Daily Free Press:

... the house at the portages for passengers and goods, which if we are to believe figures cost the Government fabulous sums, are not fit for pig pens in Ontario, while most of the boats, and tugs are, in a miserably leaky condition, and the roads which cost so much, have in many cases been allowed to make themselves.³²

When, in July, 1874, S. J. Dawson was sent by Ottawa to investigate the numerous complaints about the road, he was nearly mobbed by the crowd of disappointed passengers who were waiting at the north-west angle of the Lake of the Woods to get to Winnipeg. His only solution was to go quickly to Pointe de Chene and to send the Metis with Red River carts to bring the starving people to Winnipeg.

³¹A. Begg, History of the North-West, Vol. II, pp. 260 - 270.

³²The Manitoba Daily Free Press, July 31, 1874. (The underlining is in the original.)

All the efforts made by the federal government could not seem to make this route a success. By 1878, it was already closed but not before it had cost the Canadian people some \$1,294,887.³³ That the Dawson Road had little impact on immigration and settlement in Manitoba is indicated by the number of passengers it carried. These figures appear for the following years: 1872 - 604 passengers; 1873 - 100 passengers; and 1876 - 2,712 passengers.³⁴

After the long and difficult journeys to Manitoba there was yet the problem of the immigrants' reception. In the 1870's, the federal authorities had made only rudimentary provisions for this purpose. The immigration agents at Winnipeg and Emerson were to meet the immigrants and supply them with necessary information. Immigrant Sheds were built to house those who did not want the expense of hotels or boarding houses, while they were trying to locate a suitable homestead. The agent was even given permission to use Fort Osborne barracks as a temporary shed when 250 settlers arrived in Winnipeg together in 1878. In similar emergencies the railway station at Emerson was made available. Helpful as such measures were they could provide little comfort. In the memory

³³A. Begg, History of the North-West, Vol. II, p. 148.

³⁴A. S. Morton, "History of Prairie Settlement", Canadian Frontiers of Settlement, Vol. II, ed. W. A. MacKintosh & W. J. G. Joerg, (Toronto: The MacMillan Co. of Canada, Ltd., 1938), pp. 51 - 52.

For the numbers of immigrants who were to come to Manitoba via the American routes as compared to the Dawson Route, see footnote 17 of Chapter II of this study.

of one immigrant the Immigration Shed recalled a picture of:

... a grimy, forbidding place, with
 dirty windows and battered doors ...
 (with) a stale, indescribable smell,
 !!! (of) a sickening compound of
 rancid oils and animal odours that
 seemed to be carried on every
 faintest current of breeze ...³⁵

A somewhat better effort to provide immigrants' quarters seems to have been made by the Colonisation Society of Manitoba. A building to receive colonists from Quebec and from the New England States was erected privately in St. Boniface, shortly after 1874. For their stay there, these immigrants expressed considerable appreciation.³⁶

Several other private efforts were made, in this decade, to welcome immigrants to Manitoba. Some reference at least remains of an Immigration Aid Society which was formed in 1873, in connection with Knox Church in Winnipeg.³⁷ Similarly, a German Immigration Society was organized in the same year to give assistance to German settlers.³⁸ These ventures, while of little significance, yet represent the beginnings of an effort that was later to occupy an important role in helping new and foreign elements to adjust to Manitoba.

³⁵Laura G. Salverson, op. cit., p. 55.

³⁶"Le Metis", May 3, 1877.

³⁷The Manitoba Gazette, April 23, 1873.

³⁸Ibid.

The transportation problems that the immigrants faced in this decade revealed one other dimension of the pattern of immigration and settlement. The problems showed that, however well-intentioned the plans to settle Manitoba, the means to fulfill these plans were yet quite imperfect.

Patterson Party arrived in Winnipeg from Paris, Ontario. In the party were some three hundred settlers who had travelled on a special train made up of eighteen cars.³ These immigrants would serve as the nucleus of new Manitoba communities. Yet they almost all came as individual settlers, eager to take advantage of a government land policy which encouraged the individual family homestead that would grow as ambition and opportunity allowed it.⁴

Upon their arrival at Emerson or Winnipeg, immigrants were immediately hard-pressed to find shelter. The accommodation of Winnipeg hotels, boarding houses and even the newcomers' tents were not sufficient. A report dated May 25, 1872, noted:

Emigrants, during the wet weather, had to run about seeking the loan of a few boards to shelter them.⁵

Nor could the government Immigrant Sheds do much to relieve the situation. The Shed, which was built in 1872 at the junction of the Red and the Assiniboine and which was "just comfortable enough for a temporary residence",⁶ was not nearly large enough to hold all the immigrants. Yet there some families stayed for several weeks while husbands and fathers were away land-hunting. This site, which also served as a camping ground for the immigrants' tents,

³Manitoba Daily Free Press, April 7, 1879.

⁴The two exceptions were the Mennonites and the Icelanders. See pp. 35 - 37.

⁵The Manitoba Gazette and Trade Review, May 25, 1872.

⁶The Manitoba Gazette and Trade Review, Aug. 31, 1872.

must have been something to see. As one occupant remembers it:

A butcher's cart came down to us ... with beefsteaks at seventy-five cents a pound, and an enterprising dairyman led two cows through the encampment and sold milk at thirty cents a quart, cafeteria style.

Added to all this, 'land agents' with pockets bulging with documents would swarm about the Immigrant Sheds in the hopes of completing a quick transaction.

Then came the exodus to the open wilderness. Sometimes, the family had sent a father or older son to locate a homestead a few months earlier. This made a family's move much easier. Otherwise, before local land agents were posted in the new settlements,⁸ immigrants had to rely on their own discretion in finding a place to homestead. If they heard of a good area, they would move in that direction, hoping it would take them to the 'promised' land. Or, they could join together and hire the services of a land guide. Applications to the local mail contractor were recommended for this purpose. As well, there were the numerous 'runners', often of questionable character, that beseiged the immigrants upon their arrival in Manitoba. These were men from surrounding localities

⁷Nellie L. McClung, Clearing in the West, p. 47.

⁸By the late 1870's, these towns had their own land agents, Birtle, Turtle Mountain, Dufferin, Gladstone, Souris and Little Saskatchewan.

John Macoun, op. cit., pp. 629 - 630.

who posed as authorities on suitable homestead areas. They met the immigrants at Winnipeg and Emerson and offered their help in locating a homestead in return for considerable sums of money and keep for themselves and their horses. Frequently, their efforts produced no significant results and immigrants were well advised to stay away from them. As the decade progressed, the local land offices had guides assigned to them. But their services, while free, were usually based on little experience. One account tells of a guide who, not certain of where he was going, led his followers into a swamp and had to be pulled out by them.⁹

There were also the land speculators and the private agents who tried to lure immigrants to purchase land from them. While they had some influence, it seems that it was not until after the 1870's that they made much impact on the choice of settlements. But there were other sources, often of valuable information. The local newspapers and, particularly, The Manitoba Daily Free Press, carried long columns all through this period reporting on good homestead locations, the settlement routes to reach them, and the areas that had already been claimed. As well, there was the Manitoba Directory that was described as a valuable "guidebook to the Emigrant directing him to the location of friends gone before him".¹⁰ It was the detailed voters' list for each electoral district

⁹G. A. McMorran (ed.), The Souris Plain, 1881 - 1956, printed and published by The Souris Plaindealer Ltd., as a 75th Anniversary Book, p. 23.

¹⁰Manitoba Directory for 1876 - 77, (St. Boniface: La Riviere and Gauvin, 1876), Preface.

that was found in the Directory which might have been of assistance to some immigrants. Then there were the Surveyors' Reports with their brief synopsis of a township. These were fairly accurate even if limited descriptions of a locality. For example, the following account was given of Range 1, East; Township 1, in the district of Provencher:

The soil consists of the best clay loam, and is very fertile, beautifully undulating. The only timber grows on the banks of the Riviere aux Marais. It is very limited in quantity. The surface is dry, but water can be easily obtained by digging a moderate depth.¹¹

Such was the varied help and information that was given the immigrant who was trying to find good land in Manitoba.

The search for a homestead was made further complicated by the huge loads the settlers carried. They had been warned to leave behind heavy furniture, even wagons and implements and to go out "in high marching order".¹² But the fear of the unknown and the security their possessions gave them caused most settlers to take all they could carry. A typical load consisted of two wagons of "Settlers Effects" and was described as follows:

¹¹Extracts from Surveyors' Reports of Township Surveys in Manitoba and the North-West Territories, pub. by the authority of the Hon. Sir David Lewis Macpherson, K. C. M. G., Minister of the Interior, 1884), p. 3.

¹²John Macoun, op. cit., p. 627.

... in the canvas and tarpaulin were the things that would be needed on the journey, flour, bacon, dried vegetables, extra bedding, chairs, tables and boxes of clothing. In the covered wagon, ... were the necessities of the days of travel, bedding, dry wood, frying pans, pots, clothing, ox harness, whiffle trees, a neck yoke, tools, spades, ... and one bed made up and ready "in case of sickness."¹³

The heavy loads were coupled with bad roads to slow down the settlers' journey. Ten miles a day was recorded as "a good day's travelling";¹⁴ on a bad day only one mile was often covered. The diary of a fourteen year old girl, whose family left Winnipeg in the summer of 1879 to make their way westward, tells of their difficult travels by Red River cart. On Thursday, July 3rd, she made this entry:

Left Winnipeg. The horses balked; went about a hundred yards and the harness broke and it rained about ten minutes. Two hours getting through a mud hole. Got about two miles and the cart axle broke and we had to camp for the night.¹⁵

Such days may have been particularly bad ones. Yet reports all through this period testify to the ordeals of reaching a homestead. The Portage road, which, in summer, was covered daily with wagons

¹³Nellie L. McClung, op. cit., p. 56.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 59.

¹⁵from the diary of Lizzie McFadden, as quoted by R. C. Russell, The Carleton Trail, (Saskatoon: Modern Press, 1955), p. 68.

and carts, showed, at intervals, many of them "firmly mired". In this picture were "women and children sitting on their boxes in the mud while husbands and brothers (were) struggling with sunken waggons".¹⁶

There was also a pleasanter side to these journeys. Sometimes there would be stops for a day to visit with people who had left Ontario earlier. These became the occasions of a "riotous welcome".¹⁷ Or, there was the reception the traveller received at the hostelrys of Portage la Prairie which:

... in those days, was always a warm one - no matter whether he found shelter under the friendly roof of Charlie House, who kept a stopping-place in a log house ... or whether he sought the quiet retreat of Sandy Anderson on the slough, ... The big black bottle, which did service on all occasions, was produced and from out of its wonderful contents (the traveller) could have whatever he desired from gin to brandy, or brandy to gin.¹⁸

After such hospitality, a newcomer could hardly be discouraged with 'the country'. And little attention was given the immigrants who "sold out at the Portage"¹⁹ and talked of returning from where they had come. For these faint-hearted, the local press had the

¹⁶Manitoba Daily Free Press, April 18, 1879.

¹⁷Nellie McClung, op. cit., p. 61.

¹⁸R. B. Hill, Manitoba: History of its Early Settlement, Development & Resources, (Toronto: William Briggs, 1890), p. 362.

¹⁹Manitoba Daily Free Press, May 12, 1880.

greeting:

All right boys, we wish you a safe and pleasant return trip, and will try to get along without you.²⁰

Those immigrants who stayed in Manitoba were eventually confronted with the actual choice of their homestead sites. This choice, in the end, was determined by numerous and even illogical factors. In the 1870's, the time of the survey was yet important. Unsurveyed lands were not open to homesteads or for sale and the squatter had no rights except to register his land at the land office, ahead of other claimants. This situation would cause many problems, particularly in the early 1870's. After that the system of surveys, which the federal government had adopted, was rapidly extended. It was estimated that, by 1873, some 178 townships in Manitoba had already been subdivided.²¹ A second factor in the choice of land was the quality of the soil. To the authority of Palliser, and Dawson and Hind, the settlers added their own judgment that usually was remarkably good.²² Then there

²⁰Ibid.

²¹H. E. Beresford, "Early Surveys in Manitoba", a paper read before the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, Series III, No. 9, 1954, pp. 9 - 14.

²²The findings of the Palliser and the Dawson and Hind Expeditions of 1857 - 60, were made available by the immigration pamphlets of the 70's. The immigrants were to discover how much these findings often underestimated the extent of arable land in the West.

See: T. R. Weir, "Settlement in Southwestern Manitoba, 1870 - 1891", a paper read before the Manitoba Historical and Scientific Society, Series III, No. 17, pp. 56 - 64.

were such other matters as the accessibility of water, fuel, hay and game - all these played their part in the final location of a settlement.²³ The nearness of a railway line and the proximity of a town were factors that often became important to settlers only after they had discovered the difficulties that attended isolation. Finally, there were the social influences. The desire to be close to friends or to people who spoke the same language, and who had already made provisions for educational and religious institutions. The latter were, frequently, the major even if irrational reasons for the choice of a certain site. Thus, the process of early settlement in Manitoba was not a simple reaction to the offer of a 'free and fertile' homestead.

After the choice there came the application, or the claiming of a homestead. Here the settlers were faced by new problems. Because it took at least three years to secure a patent, they had to make a homestead entry as soon as possible after their arrival. Otherwise they might be faced with disputed claims. Such claims arose for several reasons. For example, it was possible to apply for the same homestead that had been applied for before. If the first person who took up the homestead was proven to be

²³Professor W. L. Morton has argued that these matters remained foremost as they had been for the Red River colonists. He suggests that, in this respect, the period 1870 - 1881 is something of a watershed between the passing of the 'squatter site' and the coming of the 'homestead site'.

See: W. L. Morton, "The Significance of Site in the Settlement of the American and Canadian Wests", reprinted from Agricultural History, No. 25, July 1951, pp. 1 - 21.

away from the land for more than six months and had made no improvements on it, a second party, with the help of two witnesses, could 'jump' the first one at the nearest land office.

Or, there were the problems arising out of the many reservations.²⁴ These led not only to the difficulties in locating a homestead but also to land actually being taken away from what should have been considered "bona fide settlers".²⁵ Complaints of such 'outrages' were frequently carried in the newspapers. In 1873, a settler from Clandeboye outlined his experience when he was in the neighborhood of St. Peter's Parish. After having obtained a homestead there he had made the necessary improvements. Some two years later he received a letter from Colonel Dennis, the Surveyor-General, telling him that the land he was on belonged to an Indian reservation. The angry settler had no choice but to leave and locate elsewhere.²⁶

Another contentious matter was that of pre-emptions. The pre-emption right which gave the homesteader a three-year option to purchase an adjoining quarter section had, at first, the appearance of generosity. It gave the homesteader an assurance that the enlargement of his farm would not be prevented. Then all

²⁴For an estimate of the amount of land that had been reserved in Manitoba, see Chapter I, p. 7 of this study.

²⁵The question of who was a "bona fide settler" was a controversial one. The local press of the time blamed the federal government because it failed to settle the matter of Crown Lands in Manitoba.

²⁶The Manitoba Free Press, a weekly, April 19, 1873.

kinds of abuses came to attend the practice. To some it seemed to be an opportunity for small scale land speculation. Others who filed their pre-emption claims were never able to take them up. The homesteader, who was unable to pay for his pre-emption at an appointed time, would mortgage his homestead and in the process he often lost both homestead and pre-emption. In the end, the pre-emption system not only brought havoc to numerous homesteaders, but it served to scatter settlements. Before it was abrogated in 1890, a considerable part of Manitoba land had been pre-empted.²⁷

Finally, there was yet the matter of the long waiting period the homesteader was subjected to when trying to get a title to his property. Here the problem lay with the federal government. To get around some of the red tape required by Ottawa,²⁸ the settlers were advised, when writing to the authorities:

Never deal with more than one subject
in a single communication; but write
a separate letter for each.²⁹

Even such interesting advice seemed to have little effect. All the while a settler would be waiting for some assurance, he might be

²⁷While it is difficult to find any break-down of these figures, the following statistics exist for pre-emption entries in Manitoba and the North-West Territories between 1874 and 1890. Some 21,420 entries were made or 3,425,000 acres were pre-empted. Of these 2,215,000 acres were in Manitoba. Only some 7.65% of the latter were ever patented.

See: Chester Martin, "Dominion Lands Policy", Canadian Frontiers of Settlement, Vol. II, p. 417.

²⁸To get some indication of the 'red tape' see Chapter I, p. 10.

²⁹John Macoun, op. cit., p. 630.

subjected to threats and intimidations. Criticisms were often launched against 'French half-breeds' who harassed the homesteader. On one occasion when the latter did not leave his improved holdings willingly, he had a party of four natives descend upon him. Thus, outnumbered, he was forced to leave.³⁰

Yet, despite all these obstacles, settlers came to seek land in Manitoba and they prospered. By 1878, James Trow, of the Select Committee of Immigration and Colonization, estimated that most settlers could already dispose of their homesteads at a considerable profit.³¹ Before that could be done much back-breaking and frustrating work had gone by, of clearing and cultivating, of hay-making and harvesting, with little equipment and with even less capital. Even the prairies needed clearing of maples, poplars and oaks, and of the shrubs, that included willows, choke-cherry, haw-thorne and hazelnut. Of all these, the oaks gave the most trouble. To clear them, they were first 'grubbed' out by the roots and then a chain was fastened around the tree trunk and horses or oxen tugged until the main tap root could be reached.³²

For the task of cultivating his soil, the settler had to provide himself with a team of horses or a yoke of oxen, a

³⁰The Manitoba Gazette and Trade Review, July 6, 1872.

³¹James Trow, Manitoba and the North-West Territories, p. 31.

³²Rockwood Echoes - 90 Years of Progress, 1870 - 1960, compiled by Rockwood - Woodlands Historical Society, (Steinbach: Derksen Printers Ltd., 1960), p. 47.

breaking plough and some harrows. Horses of all sizes were imported from Ontario and cost from \$300. to \$400. "a span".³³ Due to this high price and the greater strength of the oxen, most settlers preferred to start with the latter. (A yoke of oxen was estimated at \$130. and for a breaking plough, a settler would pay \$30.³⁴) The first simple ploughing was done by an iron plough with a wooden beam, followed in the late 1870's by the sulky. After ploughing came harrowing and sowing broadcast. Summer fallowing did not come until the mid 1880's. Yet large harvests were common from the start. The local newspapers showed much interest in the crop reports for most Manitoba settlements. A typical report was one given for Emerson in 1881:

The crops in this district are first class, much above the average. About one-tenth of the land is under cultivation, of which there are 13,000 acres in wheat which has yielded 30 bushels to the acre on the average; there have also been harvested 10,000 bushels oats, 5,000 bushels barley, 10,000 bushels flax seed and 10,000 tons of hay in first class condition.³⁵

At this time, the market price for wheat was seventy-five cents a bushel, fifty cents for oats and barley, and ninety cents for flax seed.

³³J. C. Hamilton, The Prairie Province, p. 254.

³⁴from the "Colonization Circular" of Canada's Imperial Colonial Office, as quoted by A Year in Manitoba, 1880 - 1881, p. 108.

³⁵Manitoba Daily Free Press, Sept. 16, 1881.

Haymaking was a separate and somewhat earlier operation. A date was set by law for the cutting of grass on the government's Hay Lands. Very often the horses, mower and hay-rack were shared by several farmers. Where land was very swampy some two or three tons per acre would be cut. Grass cut one day was 'put up in cock' the following and then allowed to stand for a few days 'to get the sweat out of it' before stacking.

In summer, there was also the work of fencing to protect crops and young trees from wandering cattle. While fencing was expensive it seemed to be the only remedy for the lack of a Manitoba herd law. To alleviate the costs, the authorities advised settlers to plant trees in avenues and nail poles to them. Later in the decade, barbed wire fences were introduced but only on a very small scale.

In the winter time, the settler sought employment away from his homestead. If he had a team of horses he could usually find work on the railroad where, if the ground was too frozen, rock-blasting could still be done. The railway companies paid "two and a half dollars per diem, and (gave) rations and quarters for the drivers, and hay and corn for the horses".³⁶

Thus, in both summer and winter, the homesteader had much to keep him busy in his first years. Most often, his day began very early and lasted far into the night. One account left of a

³⁶A Year in Manitoba, 1880 - 1881, etc., p. 43.

day's schedule goes as follows:

Up at five. Bob (my hired man) goes out, feeds the horses and pigs, cleans out the stable, and throws the harness on; meanwhile, I get the breakfast. After breakfast, about 6:15, we have a smoke to aid digestion, and wash up the breakfast things, then steady work till noon. I come in a little before, to put the potatoes on to boil ... and then we give ourselves and horses an hour and a half's rest, then out again till 6:30 or seven, ... Then tea, wash up dishes, mend things, set bread, .³⁷ and then bed, and glad to get to it.

Such a routine required great energy and perseverance. It was with good reason that it was not recommended for people trained in the professions. Nor was it suggested that a gentleman come:

... unless he (had) some capital, heaps of energy, and brains, or (was) quite prepared to sink the gentleman and work as a common labourer.³⁸

This advice might well have been heeded by those few who sent sons of wealthy Englishmen to 'learn farming' in the West. These "remit-tance men", who were placed as pupils with farmers, so often had no qualification for the work and their foolish mistakes made them the laughing stock of the country.³⁹

³⁷ Letters from a Young Emigrant in Manitoba, (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1883), p. 151.

³⁸ (Mrs.) Cecil Hall, A Lady's Life on a Farm in Manitoba, p. 94.

³⁹ Ida Clingan, The Virden Story, (Virden: The Empire Publishing Co., 1957), pp. 25 - 26.

Amongst the many challenges of homesteading, one of the first to confront the settler was that of building some kind of house, with very little material. In most districts, the sod hut was built first and remained a common feature on the landscape until the end of the century. A strong hut was made by setting four stout posts into the ground to enclose a rectangle of some twelve by fifteen feet. The tops of the posts were connected by logs, laid upon them, dovetailed at the corners and held in position by wooden pins driven in auger holes. A stout log was laid lengthwise along the center to form a ridge-pole and the whole frame was supported by additional logs. Then sods, three inches by fourteen inches, were cut into two feet lengths with an axe. The best sods, with long and tough roots, were taken from sloughs and hollows. These sods were built into a wall, resembling bricks resting gently against a framework of poles. Between the poles and the sods a padding of grass had been placed to prevent earth from shaking into the house. A framework of a hewn log was inserted in the south wall to leave space for a window, which would be bought only when the family's finances could afford the luxury. In the meanwhile, the opening was covered by cheesecloth, in summer, and a tent covered the doorway until doors would be made. For the roof, grass was used. It was laid on poles that had been covered with sods and then a two to three inch layer of yellow clay. Inside the hut, an earthen floor, levelled and beaten hard, could hold a stove, a bunk and a box or two, that served both for seats and storage.

Such might be the family's shelter for several decades. Similar "soddies" would be built for the homesteader's livestock.⁴⁰

Log houses usually followed the sod huts. The logs, dovetailed and raised one upon the other until the required height was reached, made a somewhat better looking home. The crevices between the logs would be plastered and the whole was either white-washed or weather-boarded and painted. Inside, the walls were given a similar treatment. Or, to exclude all air, they would first be coated with tar paper and then plastered.⁴¹

The frame house, as a rule, came much later. This was because most of its materials had to be purchased and these were more expensive than most settlers could afford. Such few frame structures as did appear in the 70's were two-storied with a very pointed roof. One record noted that the whole of such a building could be bought 'ready made' in Chicago. This meant all the parts were sent up to Winnipeg, ready-numbered "so that you had no difficulty in putting them together".⁴²

In addition to the challenges of clearing, cultivating and building a shelter, the homesteader faced others, often of particular hardship. One was the matter of transportation. In Manitoba, in the 1870's, such roads as existed were merely the trails that had been made by buffalo hunters and Hudson's Bay

⁴⁰R. Stead, The Homesteaders, (London: T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., 1916), pp. 65 - 67.

⁴¹A Year in Manitoba, 1880 - 1881, etc., p. 81.

⁴²Mrs. Cecil Hall, op. cit., p. 41.

Company employees. Often these would run through swamps and muskegs and, according to one witness, the slime and clay found there proved:

... so tenacious, that it (would) take the hair off a horse's legs in attempting to brush it off.⁴³

These conditions coupled with a lack of experience caused endless difficulties. Therefore, John Macoun, the botanist, who had travelled widely on the prairies, gave this advice to "green horns" who had trouble with the "pot-holes". In his experience:

The proper way to pass one of these places, in the wet season, is to get to one side of the usual trail and have a man lead the horse through with his feet on the broken grass and uncut sod and at least one wheel on a new track. Should the first horse break through a little grass thrown into his tracks will carry the next one across. Besides the man leading the horse another should be on each side of the cart ready to assist.⁴⁴

But such procedures most settlers would learn only by trial-and-error. In the meantime, road conditions in Manitoba presented such difficulties that, in 1878, James Trow, M. P., recommended to the federal government that bridging and repairing of the leading roads would remove serious obstacles and add several hundred permanent settlers to the province's population.⁴⁵

⁴³A Year in Manitoba, 1880 - 1881, etc., p. 26.

⁴⁴John Macoun, op. cit., pp. 229 - 230.

⁴⁵James Trow, op. cit., pp. 17 - 19.

Of not much less seriousness were the numerous perils the early settlers encountered. There were the grasshopper plagues and the early frosts; the prairie fires and the Indian threats; the flies and the mosquitoes; the loneliness, especially for bachelor-homesteaders; and, not least of all, there were the inclemencies of the Manitoba weather.

In this decade, the grasshoppers were to visit the north-western area of North American in 1872, 1873, 1874 and 1875.⁴⁶ In 1874, a cry went out that total destruction of the growing crops was imminent only a week after the pests were sighted in Manitoba. The assistance of the Dominion government was sought as it was feared "whole starvation will come within a year".⁴⁷ It was discovered that smoke could ward off the grasshoppers and smudges would be made, at least, to save the garden plots. As evidence of the seriousness of the problem, on one occasion it was reported that the grasshoppers were swept up into bushels, scalded with hot water and fed to the pigs.⁴⁸ The mosquitoes were a more common, if less destructive, evil. Immigrants from the British Isles found it particularly hard to get 'acclimatized' to them. Their visitations would commence in May or June of each year and the air would be reported "black with them", in some places. They were found to be "great big yellow insects, about half an inch long"⁴⁹ and for their bites only ammonia served as a remedy.

⁴⁶J. C. Hamilton, op. cit., p. 161.

⁴⁷Manitoba Daily Free Press, July 24, 1874.

⁴⁸J. C. Hamilton, op. cit., p. 157.

⁴⁹Mrs. Cecil Hall, op. cit., p. 96.

As well, there were the threats of prairie fire and of Indians. The prairie fires were usually caused by the abundance of dry grass and they would frequently destroy the entire property of a settler. Numerous fire announcements appeared in the local newspapers and these were accompanied by advice on how to contain a fire by ploughing and how to meet it when travelling on the open plains. The threat from Indians came mostly from those not yet under treaty. There was the case of the Sioux Indians who had come from Minnesota in 1863 and had been given a reserve on the Little Saskatchewan. When the locusts destroyed most of their crop they moved to Lake Manitoba and sought food by fishing or begging and stealing. This coupled with their strong love of alcohol and gambling made them a constant fear to the people at the Portage.⁵⁰

In the absence of any of these difficulties there was always the Manitoba weather. Complaints against its harshness were very common. To testify to its 'fickleness' one newcomer noted:

No two days are alike; and I never was in any country where you can with so little accuracy forecast the morrow's weather ... Here was a variation of 40° in two or three days' interval only, but it sometimes will equally occur in twenty-four hours.⁵¹

To give a fair warning to prospective settlers, one letter to

⁵⁰J. C. Hamilton, op. cit., pp. 76 - 77.

⁵¹A Year in Manitoba, 1880 - 1881, etc., p. 62.

'people back home' carried this lament:

The weather is so cold up here that a young man of industrious habits requires sixty cords of hard-wood for courting a Red River girl during the month of January. The stoves are fourteen feet long and nine feet high.⁵²

The above statement suggests another problem in the early settlements. A serious handicap that confronted the single homesteader was the little time he had for his own care and sustenance. This, together with extreme loneliness, brought many calls for assistance. In 1872, the Toronto Globe had advised every bachelor:

Who proposes to move to the North-West in the spring (to) give some one an opportunity of showing what she can do and endure as the wife of a pioneer.⁵³

This proved to be no simple order. Those who did not marry prior to their coming had little opportunity to do so in the West. About the situation this comment was made:

Every girl is pounced on directly she puts her face inside the settlement. Young fellows get so sick of the monotony of baching.⁵⁴

⁵²from a postscript to a letter from Fort Garry to the Danbury Newsman in Nova Scotia, as quoted by J. C. Hamilton, op. cit., p. 106.

⁵³The Manitoba Gazette and Trade Review, Mar. 16, 1872.

⁵⁴Letters from a Young Emigrant in Manitoba, p. 90.

Of his own, rather ambitious plans, this same observer noted:

I hope to get Frank (his brother) out,
... or marry some young lady well versed
in scrubbing, washing, baking, dairying,
getting up at 3:30 in summer, 5:50 in
winter; strong nerves, strong⁵⁵ constitution,
obedient and good with money.

The bachelor left no evidence to show that his hopes were fulfilled!

Thus, the more ordinary challenges of securing a decent supply of food and clothing presented their problems. And the bachelor-homesteader was not alone in experiencing them. When a homesteading family had sufficient money to purchase a cow, pigs or poultry, they could have fresh meat, at least, in winter. In summer, a good food supply was harder to come by. Without the frozen meat that had been good all winter, the settlers depended on fish. If these were scarce, they were supplemented by wild fruits and game birds. There was also the food settlers could purchase in the small towns or in Winnipeg. The prices of these varied as the supply was so irregular and uncertain. A fair estimate of food prices in Manitoba, in the 1870's, indicated that butter was thirty cents a pound; eggs, thirty cents a dozen; beef, twelve and a half cents a pound; veal, twenty cents; pork, twenty cents; and fresh fish about five cents.⁵⁶ An advertisement by H. L. Reynolds, one Winnipeg storekeeper showed that tea was available at fifty cents

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ J. Y. Shantz, Narrative of a Journey to Manitoba, p. 10.

a pound and coffee at twenty-five cents.⁵⁷ These prices were too high for most of the homesteaders and they got along on the simplest fare. They would often follow the habits of the native population and live on bannock, tea and pemmican.⁵⁸

The clothing needs of these people could not always be so easily satisfied. In the winter, hands had to be covered with 'mittens' which were large leather gloves without fingers and lined with duffel or felt. The feet required mocassins made of untanned moose or buffalo hide with a duffel lining. Then, as protection against the strong prairie winds there was the "... universal buffalo great coat to cover all; making a man look more like a huge brown bear than anything human".⁵⁹ Those who could afford ready-made clothes found a good selection in the big Winnipeg stores. The Hudson's Bay store and Stobarts and Eden's posted ads all through the 1870's telling of imports at reasonable prices. One ad announced that men's suits were selling from \$5.00 to \$22.00. Children's suits were from \$1.50 upwards and straw hats were ten cents.⁶⁰ There were also the clothes made of flannel, bought by the yard and sewn by hand or, if the family was fortunate, by sewing machine. Such clothing served most of the homesteaders and for even the best of occasions.

⁵⁷ Manitoba Daily Free Press, Mar. 2, 1878.

⁵⁸ Margaret M. Fahrni & W. L. Morton, Third Crossing, p. 12. (Winnipeg: Advocate Printers Ltd., 1946), p. 11.

⁵⁹ A Year in Manitoba, 1880 - 1881, p. 61.

⁶⁰ Manitoba Daily Free Press, July 5, 1876.

All the challenges and the frustrations which confronted the first homesteaders, were to be reflected in the statistics for the time. Between 1874 and 1880, the homestead entries for Manitoba, apart from the Mennonite and Icelandic ones, numbered 10,988. In the same period, there were some 5,903 homestead cancellations.⁶¹ (For a count of the homestead entries in each year of this decade, see Appendix B.) The cancellations often represent settlers that were lost to Manitoba. Their disappointments in the Canadian West, frequently led them to try their fortunes in the American West or to return 'back home'.

Yet, for the most part, the tide of settlement continued to grow. Already in 1875, Manitoba's settlements showed the following divisions: the settlements along the trails from Kildonan to Shoal Lake, which included Grassmere, Woodlands, Victoria and Dundas; the settlements from Winnipeg to Portage la Prairie, which included Poplar Heights, Ossora and Melbourne; the settlements west of Portage la Prairie, which included Westbourne, Palestine and Livingstone; the settlements south-west of Winnipeg, which included, in particular, the Boyne Settlement; the settlements near Lake Winnipeg, of which the important one was Clandeboye; the settlements east of the Red River, which included Millbrook and Sunnyside; and the settlements along the Dawson Road, which included Prairie Grove and Clear Springs.

⁶¹These statistics are found in the Canada Yearbook, 1926, and are quoted by -

J. B. Hedges, Building the Canadian West - The Land and Colonization Plans of the C. P. R., p. 11.

While, in 1875, these were still almost all tiny settlements, they already revealed two significant characteristics. They were scattered throughout the province and they were peopled mostly by Anglo-Saxons from Ontario and from the British Isles.⁶²

Of the numerous settlements the ones around Portage la Prairie were probably the most important ones. Some had their beginnings before this decade and they were connected to Winnipeg by both stage coach and steamer. The town of Portage la Prairie itself, which, in 1872, was described as "a village with six stores, a grist mill, four saw mills, and quite a large number of mechanics",⁶³ was, by 1881, a thriving center of some 4,000 people.⁶⁴ Ontario settlers had been attracted to the area, not only by the stage coach and steamer service, but also by the fertile plains and the vision of a railroad.

Other settlements had their own peculiar beginnings and were soon to develop distinctive features. The Carman district had its start when a party of Ontario settlers arrived there on April 26, 1871. In this party were people of English, Scottish, Irish and Norwegian background.⁶⁵ The Boyne Settlement in the Pembina Mountain region, by 1872, had received some thirty Ontario

⁶²As an indication of the countries of origin of the people who came to Manitoba, in this period there is the following report:

Immigrants to come to Man. & N. W. Territories from Europe	- 3,340
Immigrants to come to Man. & N. W. Territories from the U. S.	- 3,758
Immigrants to come to Man. & N. W. Territories from Canada	- 21,513

See: Canada, Sessional Papers, 45 Vict., Vol. XV, (1882), "Report of the Minister of Agriculture for the Calendar Year, 1881".

⁶³J. Y. Shantz, Narrative of a Journey to Manitoba, p. 9.

⁶⁴Margaret McWilliams, Manitoba Milestones, p. 150.

⁶⁵Rev. George Hambley, Trails of the Pioneers, (Altona: D. W. Friesen & Sons, Ltd., 1956), pp. 10 - 13.

families. Much was anticipated from these people with "their intelligence and wide-awake enterprise".⁶⁶ Then, there was the Gladstone settlement to which the first settlers came in July, 1871, and thus started the settlement farthest west in Canada.⁶⁷ Or, there was the Rapid City area which was laid out by an English syndicate in 1877, and the town became the oldest one in north-western Manitoba.⁶⁸

Some settlements claimed the distinction of having nobility. A reference exists of Lord Elphinstone making hay on his farm twenty miles west of Minnedosa. To signify the event, this report appeared in the local press:

His lordship intends to attend personally to the mowing and stacking of his hay this season.⁶⁹

Similarly, there was the settlement at White Horse Plains, near Headingly, to which a group of British settlers who were graduates of British universities had come. There they lived the lives of English gentlemen while yet not avoiding hard work.⁷⁰

To all the above developments there were two notable exceptions: the Mennonite and Icelandic Reserves that were set

⁶⁶The Manitoba Free Press, a weekly, Nov. 9, 1872.

⁶⁷Margaret M. Fahrni & W. L. Morton, Third Crossing, (Winnipeg: Advocate Printers Ltd., 1946), p. 11.

⁶⁸Robert B. Hill, op. cit., p. 50.

⁶⁹The Manitoba Daily Free Press, Sept. 9, 1880.

⁷⁰Margaret McWilliams, op. cit., pp. 163 - 165.

up in Manitoba in 1874 and 1875.⁷¹ These fairly large and successful ventures were not entirely contrary to the settlement pattern that was emerging in the province. They were colonization efforts that were located in different parts of the country so that large solid blocks of foreign settlements could not develop. As well, they were able to grow only as long as English-speaking settlers did not move in to occupy homesteads amongst them. Finally, for the Mennonites, at least, homestead entries were made by one of their chosen representatives so that, in theory, the principle of individual settlement was preserved.⁷²

The picture of settlement that emerged in Manitoba, in the 1870's, was then one of a variety of settlements, made mostly within the bounds of the homestead law and with Anglo-Saxon and Ontario people predominating. This development, which began with the first years of the decade, was to continue by a process of slow but steady growth. Then, all this was to culminate in the Boom of 1881.

Whatever the origins of the Boom, once it began it influenced all parts of the province. Eastern capital had been placed in the hands of local banks and a general craze was to come over most of the people. The real estate offices were the centers

⁷¹A reference to these two settlements is made in Chapter II of this study, where colonization schemes are discussed.

⁷²E. K. Francis, "The Origins of Mennonite Institutions in Early Manitoba", a paper read before the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, 1946, pp. 56 - 70.

of the activity. One observer gave this description of one such place:

... all classes and professions were represented, from the cowboy to the most grave and reverend parson, all sitting, apparently waiting and watching the market.⁷³

By night, auction sales were held in the bar-rooms of taverns. Land was sold like any commodity such as butter or eggs. In Rapid City, where the 'Boom' was in anticipation of a railway, good locations on 'Main Street' were selling for \$200. to \$250.⁷⁴ Then, in 1882, the Boom ended abruptly, bringing considerable hardship to a large number of settlers. Goods, chattels, and even farms often passed into the hands of loan companies. Only a "fundamental economic health"⁷⁵ of the time helped to avoid the province's bankruptcy.

With all its bizarre aspects, the Boom of 1881 was yet a fitting conclusion to the first decade of immigration and settlement in Manitoba. It symbolized, even if in exaggerated form, the risk and enthusiasm that accompanied the first large influx of settlers to the province. It gave a notorious publicity to the great opportunities that lay in the West. It served as:

⁷³Ibid., p. 433.

⁷⁴W. H. Williams, Manitoba and the North-West, p. 239.

⁷⁵Margaret M. Fahrni & W. L. Morton, op. cit., p. 87.

The galvanic shock ... (that) thrust
the frontier forward once more, out, along
the old trails and the new railway.⁷⁶

Then for the next decade, in the settlement of the province, the
Boom taught the lesson of a greater caution.

After the ten year period that ended in 1881 was
over, the foundations for the mass settlement of Manitoba had been
established. Of these foundations, the homestead system with all
its challenges became the most significant part of a pattern by
which all subsequent settlement in the province was to take place.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 87.

2. Social Life and Social Institutions

The process of immigration and settlement is only, in part, the migration of people to a new physical environment and the exploitation by those people of new virgin resources. There is also the important process of establishing 'new' social institutions and of evolving 'new' ways of social life. Those immigrants who came to Manitoba between 1870 and 1881 were already familiar with institutions and social habits in other places. These they brought with them, just as they brought their household effects, from Eastern Canada and from the British Isles, from Russia and from Iceland. In adapting them to a new environment, the institutions lost somethings; so too, they gained somethings.⁷⁷ At the same time, the individual settler underwent a change. This was even encouraged by Rev. George Bryce when he held out this hope to Manitoba's newcomers:

In going to a new country you must give up society; but then you may assist in building up a new society, in which you may form a more important⁷⁸ factor than in the one you have left.

In this decade, of many beginnings, the 'society', which most of the Manitoba settlements were to experience, was to

⁷⁷For a good discussion of the general aspects of adapting social institutions to a pioneer community, see: C. A. Dawson & Eva R. Young, "Pioneering in the Prairie Provinces; The Social Side of the Settlement Process", Can. Frontiers of Settlement, Vol. VIII, ed. W. A. Mackintosh & W. L. G. Joerg, (Toronto: The MacMillan Co. of Canada Ltd., 1940).

⁷⁸Rev. George Bryce, Manitoba: Its Infancy, Growth & Present Condition, (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1882), p. 333.

consist largely of informal and, often loosely organized, activities. For example, there were the many forms of entertainment. From the beginning of this period there were the national societies - St. George's, St. Andrew's and St. Patrick's. These were "flourishing institutions",⁷⁹ that not only gave help to newcomers, but also held annual celebrations that were well attended. There were the sporting activities that included skating, snowshoeing and curling in winter, and lacrosse, baseball and racing in summer. Many of these sports got their first real promotion in this decade. In the mid 70's one record noted:

Winnipeg held its first Skating Carnival last Thursday evening. There were over two hundred spectators and one hundred and twenty-five masked skaters, who made a grand display, gliding around the rink in their gay costumes, waltzing time to the music provided by the Battalion Band.⁸⁰

By 1880, covered skating rinks were found in Winnipeg and these attracted large numbers. The first game of curling under cover was held in Manitoba on December 12, 1876, and the team that was defeated had to supply a barrel of oatmeal to a local hospital.⁸¹ In 1875, a Manitoba Rifle Association was formed and its annual matches, in St. Boniface, attracted much attention.

⁷⁹John Macoun, op. cit., p. 505.

⁸⁰"The First Fancy Dress Assembly on Ice in Manitoba", The Standard, Jan. 30, 1875.

⁸¹Holly S. Seaman, Manitoba - Landmarks and Red Letter Days, p. 69.

There were also the numerous activities that whole communities could participate in. These included the picnics, the festivals, the surprise parties and the visits. Dominion Day usually called for an annual picnic and, in 1878, it coincided with the opening of Dufferin Park in Winnipeg. The afternoon was given to lacrosse and baseball matches. In the evening came the 'artillery sports'. These ranged from the one hundred yard dashes to the mile race. The Ste. Jean Baptiste Society from St. Boniface gave a great display of fireworks 'across the river'. The day ended with 'large crowds' attending the Paris Circus and Troubadors.⁸²

The picnics in the smaller communities were usually held by the river sides. On such occasions, there were the baseball games between married and single men, the foot races (in which girls could not participate) and, to provide hilarious entertainment, there were the ox-races. In the latter, riders mounted the oxen while others held ropes fastened around the animals' necks to guide them over the finish line. Oxen that were bothered by flies might suddenly take off to the nearest shade and no coaxing would bring them back to the races.⁸³ As a fitting climax to the event, there were the huge 'lunches' at the end of the day. Seated on the ground or on benches, all the picnic's attendants would enjoy a feast of raisin and cinnamon buns, do-nuts, cookies and railroad cake, lettuce cut up in sour cream, cold sliced ham, vinegar pies and, if there was a 'surprise box', there might even be oranges and bananas.⁸⁴

⁸²The Manitoba Daily Free Press, July 2, 1878.

⁸³Rockwood Echoes, p. 48.

⁸⁴Nellie L. McClung, op. cit., pp. 107 - 108.

Festival celebrations were most often in winter time. Announcements would appear in the local newspaper telling of such an event that might be held on Christmas Day. A dinner would be served for a small sum such as twenty-five cents, and readings and recitations or vocal and instrumental music would follow. One advertisement added:

Several prominent speakers (would)⁸⁵
deliver addresses on the occasion.

To such a festivity, the whole community would be 'cordially invited'.

On an even less formal plane, there were the friendly visits. A whole family might move in on another one and thus provide great opportunity to discuss common problems. The families would reminisce about the Ontario homes they had left behind, wonder when a railway would pass them by, talk about their shanties, and make plans for next year's crops.⁸⁶ Sometimes the visits would take the form of a 'surprise party'. At such times, the largest house in the neighborhood was usually selected and to it, on an evening, the whole settlement would come for a celebration. All these activities, organized or otherwise, provided great relief to the loneliness that was a problem for most early settlers, particularly for the mothers who had left behind them their friends and their securities.

To this 'institutional growth' which took place in Manitoba in one decade, little was to be added until the next century.

⁸⁵ Manitoba Gazette, Dec. 14, 1878.

⁸⁶ Hazel M. Parkinson, The Mere Living, (Altona: D. W. Friesen & Sons, 1957), p. 46.

The pattern that had been established by the end of 1881 ranged from the keeping of Sunday "with Puritan exactness",⁸⁷ to the great solemnity that attended a funeral. Such a pattern, dependent as it was on its Ontario models, could provide much comfort to the 'new' Eastern settlers.

Finally, there are the numerous developments which, while not directly borrowed from elsewhere, all made their contribution to the social life of the province. About a dozen weekly newspapers made their appearance, most of them only to die in this decade. At least one of them, the Marquette Review, in 1876, made its appearance in one of the new settlements outside Winnipeg. These, and the few magazines settlers could obtain from 'back home' would provide much interesting reading for the long winter evenings. There was the mail which produced the few letters that were so eagerly devoured. By the fall of 1874 Manitoba had a daily mail service, but it took much longer for letters to reach isolated communities. In such cases even the mailman was a significant social institution.

For the more sophisticated elements in the province, the 1870's also saw the beginnings of theatrical and literary societies. In the 1870's, "Theatre Royal" was started in Winnipeg at the rear of a store. Some four or five other theatres followed and in 1872 "The Opera House" was built in Winnipeg on the north side of Bannatyne Street.⁸⁸ As well, in 1879, by an Act of the

⁸⁷Col. Sam Steele, Forty Years in Canada, (Toronto: McClelland, Goodchild & Stewart Ltd., 1915), p. 43.

⁸⁸Irene Craig, "Grease Paint on the Prairies", a paper read before the Manitoba Historical and Scientific Society, Series III, 1947, pp. 38 - 53.

Manitoba Legislature, the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba was incorporated. Its appeal was not only to those of literary tastes but it aimed to serve the new province by

... rescu(ing) from oblivion the memories of the early missionaries, fur traders, explorers and settlers ...⁸⁹

When examining the more formal institutions of Manitoba in this decade, the picture that emerges is one of Ontario institutions that were transplanted and then, later, transformed. From this picture there were few departures. To the mind of one settler, the scene appeared as follows:

Everything here seems to compare favourably with the towns of the old provinces. Society is almost European, i.e., if one may judge from first appearances. Commerce is transacted with a strict regard to commercial honor, and politics - that scientific evil - loses much of the venom which⁹⁰ attaches itself to it in Ontario and Quebec.

In two institutions that are very important to the pioneer community, the impact of Ontario was especially felt. These were the school and the church. In both, the ascendancy of Anglo-Saxon and Protestant elements was the direct result of the large influx of settlers from the East. And, before the decade was over, the entire educational and religious life of Manitoba had been changed.

⁸⁹This is part of Section I of the Society's Constitution of 1879.

⁹⁰A letter to the editor, The Manitoba Daily Free Press, Feb. 13, 1879.

On the educational scene, this movement had many manifestations. The first schools of the new settlements employed Ontario teachers and text-books until they could afford their own. On a higher level, Manitoba College was begun in 1871 and by 1874 was a strong influence, doing "a large part of the work in Higher Education for the incoming English-speaking element".⁹¹ Only, the University of Manitoba that was constituted in 1877 tried to recognize the historical duality of the province.⁹²

In their religious life, the early settlers showed even more enthusiasm for providing themselves with the church services they had known. It was only the smallness and the remoteness of some communities, and the shortage of trained ministers that caused the slowness with which the early missions became organized churches. At such points, homes were often used as places of worship. The Methodists held tent or open air meetings. To such meetings the local press would give front page coverage. On one occasion at Camp Meadow Lee, thirteen tents were erected and there was "demand for more". Some fifteen ministers participated in the sermons. Then long prayers would be followed by "cheerful conversation around a central camp fire".⁹³ Such events were common to many settlements in the 70's and were but one indication of the Methodist spirit that

⁹¹Rev. George Bryce, op. cit., p. 314.

⁹²The University's Council was to consist "of Bishops and Presbyterian Elders, priests and presbyters, blended together in the most unique manner". Ibid.

⁹³Manitoba Daily Free Press, Sept. 10, 1881.

had been imported from Ontario. There was also the temperance movement which came to Manitoba in this period. By its intense moral earnestness and its widespread acceptance, no settler throughout the North-West was supposed to be in possession of "any fermented liquors". The lament of those who felt the Manitoba climate "demands something better than tea and water",⁹⁴ received little sympathy!

In conclusion, these points can be made about the society that emerged in Manitoba between 1870 and 1881. It was both old and new; many of its aspects had originated in the homes of the settlers but in coming to Manitoba they were transformed. It conferred many benefits; not only did it bring settlers closer together but, in doing so, it helped them overcome many physical and economic hardships. It also placed the province's social development along narrow paths; its strong moral element was to leave a profound effect on what was a largely rural province. Finally, it helped determine the population of Manitoba; by its emphasis on an Anglo-Saxon way of life, it attracted, for several decades, the same kind of people. Thus, the society that was born in Manitoba in this decade, was an integral part of a pattern of immigration and settlement.

⁹⁴A Year in Manitoba, 1880 - 1881, etc., p. 86.

Summary and Conclusions

By the end of 1881 the first important phase in the settlement of Manitoba was over. While a large scale movement of people to the province had to wait until a later period, some general trends had at least been developed. These trends were the beginnings of the pattern of immigration and settlement that has been the subject of this study.

At the center of the pattern was the settler of Anglo-Saxon or, at least, of Nordic stock and of agrarian background, with some capital. This center provided a focus for various developments. The first one of importance was the organization of government legislation under which immigration and settlement could take place. Then came the activities of the numerous immigration agencies that tried to seek out the 'desirable emigrants'. Next, rudimentary efforts were made to organize a transportation system that would facilitate the actual movement of immigrants. The introduction of a homestead system meant that settlers were encouraged to take up individual rather than group settlement. Finally, the adjustment to a new environment brought social institutions that were based, largely, on Ontario models.

While much was anticipated from this pattern, yet it failed to produce significant results. In part, this was due to the inadequacies it revealed from within. The government legislation was well-intentioned but needed much more co-ordination. The immigration agencies concentrated their efforts abroad while ignoring the

problems settlers faced at home. The transportation facilities were very crude and even non-existent. Finally, the offer of a 'free' homestead was coupled with the difficulties of finding a suitable site and of facing isolation.

Partly, the pattern did not succeed due to the problems it faced from without. The time for a mass influx of people to the Canadian West had not yet come. The strong appeal of the American West was not to disappear, at least until 1890. As well, there was the competition from Australia and New Zealand. Finally, there was the serious economic depression that lasted for most of the 1870's.

Yet the pattern had some impact on the development of Manitoba. It had helped to bring out settlers so that by the end of 1881 the population of the province had more than tripled.¹ It had encouraged the birth of numerous settlements. It had fostered the growth of some of Manitoba's first industries. And, it had greatly increased the province's contacts with the outside world.

In other matters little had been accomplished. It would take long and painful experience to teach the settlers how to cultivate the prairies, successfully. Nor did the scattered nature of the settlements allow common social attitudes to arise. If in 1870, Manitoba "was not much more than a geographical expression",² in 1881, a Manitoba society had yet to be born.

¹The estimates that are given for the population of Manitoba indicate that in 1871 there were some 12,228 settlers plus 6,767 native people. In 1881, this population was estimated to have increased to 65,954.

See: John Macoun, op. cit., p. 679.

²Watson Kirkconnell, "Manitoba, 1870 - 1930", an article in Manitoba's Diamond Jubilee, 1870 - 1930, in the Library of the University of Manitoba.

APPENDIX A

Expenditures of the Federal Government on
on Immigration, 1870 - 1881

- from an article by W. D. Scott, "Immigration and Population"
in Canada and its Provinces, Vol. 7, p. 587.

1870	-	\$ 54,004.20
1871	-	109,953.90
1872	-	265,717.79
1873	-	291,296.57
1874	-	278,776.99
1875	-	338,179.10
1876	-	309,352.90
1877	-	154,351.42
1878	-	186,403.06
1879	-	161,213.32
1880	-	214,251.05
1881	-	215,339.29

APPENDIX B

Homestead Entries for Manitoba (1872 - 1881)

- from statistics supplied to the Manitoba Resources Commission, as quoted by Chester Martin, "Dominion Lands Policy", Canadian Frontiers of Settlement, Vol. II, editors W. A. Mackintosh and W. J. G. Joerg, (Toronto: The MacMillan Co. of Canada, Ltd., 1938).

(Note: The following include certain entries from the North-West Territories.)

1872	-	283	entries
1873	-	878	"
1874	-	1,376	"
1875	-	499	"
1876	-	347	"
1877	-	832	"
1878	-	1,753	"
1879	-	3,876	"
1880	-	2,074	"
1881	-	2,730	"

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